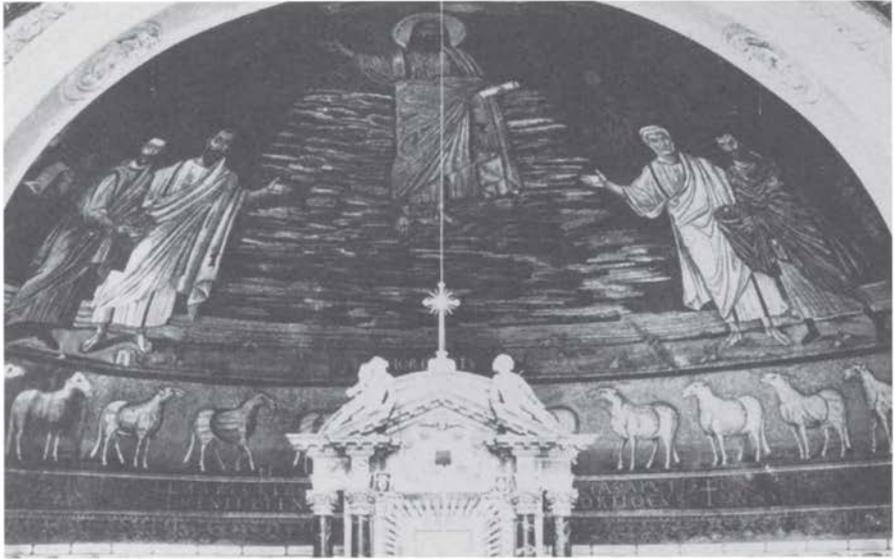

BYZANTIUM
AND THE
ARABS IN
THE SIXTH
CENTURY

VOLUME I | PART 2

IRFAN SHAHÎD

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS
IN THE
SIXTH CENTURY



The two Arab martyrs and saints Cosmas and Damian, already crowned, are presented to Christ by Saints Peter and Paul. Mosaic from the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY).

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS
IN THE
SIXTH CENTURY

IRFAN SHAHÎD

Volume I

Part 2: Ecclesiastical History

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PART TWO
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

Introduction

The chapters that constitute Part Two on ecclesiastical history present the role of the Arab *foederati* in the history of the Byzantine church in Oriens in the reigns of the emperors of the sixth century and in those of Phocas and Heraclius in the seventh. This century and a half may be divided into three periods as far as Arab-Byzantine ecclesiastical relations are concerned.

1. The first period is represented by the reign of Anastasius, especially the second decade of the century when Anastasius became openly Monophysite and with him the Ghassānids. Federate-imperial relations were at their best since lord and vassal belonged to the same doctrinal confession.

2. The second or middle period opens with the accession of a Chalcedonian emperor, Justin I, in 518 and the beginning of a sharp reversal in imperial ecclesiastical policy. This middle period is characterized by tensions that strained the Arab-Byzantine relationship throughout the reign of Justin I, Justinian, Justin II, and Tiberius, until it led to a bloody encounter with the central government in 581 and the suspension of the Ghassānid phylarchate for five years. The loyalty of the Ghassānids to the Monophysite confession and their refusal to convert to Dyophysitism lie at the root of these tensions.

3. The third period opens in 587, when the Ghassānid phylarchate was restored during the reign of Maurice, the same emperor who had exiled the Ghassānid king, Mundir, to Sicily. A *modus vivendi* between the two parties was worked out and endured throughout the reign until the death of Maurice in 602. It also continued into the last two reigns of the proto-Byzantine period, those of Phocas and Heraclius, with a definite improvement in relations, especially during the reign of Heraclius.

This diachronous treatment of Arab-Byzantine ecclesiastical relations is followed by a number of topical studies that treat some saints with whom the Arabs had a special relationship, such as Sergius, Cosmas and Damian, and Julian of Emesa. The last chapter treats Arab Christianity in the Sinai Peninsula, while the Epilogue brings together the Arab *foederati* of the East and the German *foederati* of the West as the adherents of non-orthodox Christian confessions, namely, Monophysitism and Arianism. The comparative context in which these two federate groups are discussed is consonant with one dimen-

sion of the history of the Arab federates, their role as the Germans of the East,¹ and the comparison is illuminating.

In addition to recording the history of the Ghassānid involvement in and contribution to the Monophysite movement, this volume reveals other aspects of Ghassānid life and history that have been obscure. Among other things, these protectors of the Monophysite confession emerge as sedentaries and builders of churches and monasteries. *BASIC II* will discuss their structures and other aspects of their cultural life in detail.

¹ See the introductions to *BAFOC*, 8–11, and *BASIC I.1*, xxix; and below, 737.

IX

The Reign of Anastasius (491–518)

The early period coincides with the reign of Anastasius, the crucial reign for the fortunes of Monophysitism and the ecclesiastical history of the Christian Orient throughout the sixth century, since it witnessed the triumph of that movement when the emperor himself in the last years of his reign became openly Monophysite. Brief as that period was, it proved sufficiently important to set the stage for the tensions¹ and disputes of the entire century between the Monophysites of the Pars Orientalis and the central Dyophysite government in Constantinople, after the death of Anastasius in 518.

How the extraordinary happened, and the *autokrator* was won over to Monophysitism, has been explained by ecclesiastical historians. That movement was lucky enough to be guided by two powerful and influential theologians. One was Philoxenus, a Persian firebrand, who for the long period of his episcopate over Hierapolis (485–518) worked fervently and incessantly for the triumph of the movement. The other was Severus, a Greek from Sozopolis in Pisidia, ascetic, dedicated, and administratively energetic. The combined efforts of the two, one working in Constantinople and the other in Syria, finally prevailed upon Emperor Anastasius to move toward the Monophysite position. The emperor was already inclined to it, and it was alleged that he was the son of an Arian mother and the nephew of a Manichaean uncle. So it was not very hard for the two powerful ecclesiastics to effect his conversion, and bring about the deposition of the three Chalcedonian patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and the appointment of others who were Monophysites, including Severus himself to the see of Antioch.²

This was the ecclesiastical scene in the second decade of the sixth century, and it is not difficult to see how this ecclesiastical revolution affected the Arab *foederati*, especially the Ghassānids in Oriens, who, too, became Monophysite and ardent ones at that, during this reign.

This chapter will, therefore, treat the efforts of the Monophysites to influence the Arabs and draw them into their orbit. It will discuss these

¹ Especially during the reigns of Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice.

² For this, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972), 213–20.

efforts first within the empire, with the Ghassānids and the Kindites, and then outside the empire in Ḥīra and in South Arabia. It is in fact the story of the Monophysite mission to the Arabs in the reign of Anastasius.³

I. WITHIN THE EMPIRE

The reign of Anastasius witnessed the influx of new federate blood into Oriens, represented by the Ghassānids and the Kindites, which thus made the federate structure in that diocese even more complex. In addition to the old federates of the fourth and fifth centuries, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids respectively, Oriens now had two new powerful groups that dominated Arab-Byzantine relations.

The doctrinal persuasion of these various federate groups in Oriens in the reign of Anastasius as a result of the change of Anastasius' doctrinal stance to Monophysitism is not clear. The Tanūkhids and the Salīhids were Orthodox, but how they were affected by the ecclesiastical policy of Anastasius is not known. There is absolutely nothing in the sources for the reign which could help answer this question. As to the two newcomers, Ghassān and Kinda, certainty about confessional color can be predicated of the former, not of the latter. But there are at least echoes in the sources which help the process of reconstructing the religious history of these two federate groups in the reign of Anastasius.

The Ghassānids

The conversion of Ghassān to Christianity as part of its settlement within the *limes* on Roman territory is mentioned by Ya'qūbī for the period antedating 502 when they had not yet toppled the Salīhids as the dominant Arab federate group in the service of Byzantium.⁴ The presumption is that they were then Chalcedonians,⁵ especially as Anastasius was then in the first decade of his reign. Although he was personally inclined toward Monophysitism, he was interested in good relations with Rome and in restoring religious unity, and had not yet championed the Monophysite cause openly. This was also the situation after the turn of the century when the *foedus* of 502 was concluded.

³ It will thus complement other works for other reigns, such as Isrun Engelhardt, *Mission und Politik in Byzanz: Ein Beitrag zur Strukturanalyse byzantinischer Mission zur Zeit Justins und Justinians* (Munich, 1974).

⁴ See Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1960), I, 205. On Ghassānid-Salīhid relations before 502, see *BAFIC*, 282–89.

⁵ If these Ghassānids were related to those of Amorkesos, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo, chances are that they were Chalcedonians. On the possibility that Amorkesos was a Ghassānid who was of the same doctrinal persuasion as his master Leo, see *BAFIC*, 59–113.

So the exact doctrinal persuasion of the new *foederati* could not have been an issue as long as they were Christian.

The situation changed dramatically around 510, and the conversion of the Ghassānids to Monophysitism must have occurred in the last decade of the reign of Anastasius since they are attested as Monophysite early in the reign of the Chalcedonian Justin I. It was in this period that Anastasius departed from his neutrality and openly championed the Monophysite cause. How the conversion of the Ghassānids to Monophysitism was effected is not documented, but there is little doubt that it took place in this decade under the influence of the energetic and enthusiastic patriarch, Severus of Antioch, who was possessed by an ardent desire to convert the world to Monophysitism. Since the Ghassānids lived within his jurisdiction in Oriens, they probably succumbed to his overtures.

This conclusion is of course inferential. One can support it by reference to the mission of Severus to Mundir, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra in 513, trying to convert him to Monophysitism.⁶ It can be argued *a fortiori* that Severus would have sent a similar mission to convert those Arabs who were *within* Byzantine territory. Although the extant sources are silent on any overtures made by Severus to the Ghassānids, they mention those made by other Monophysite ecclesiastics, who worked energetically beside Severus for the spread of Monophysitism, such as Philoxenus. There is extant a fragment of a letter addressed by him to John the Arab (Ṭayāyē), in which the bishop of Hierapolis expounds Monophysite theology. The addressee has been tentatively identified as John, the bishop of the Arabs of Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria) in Phoenicia Libanensis,⁷ who was a Monophysite prelate during the reign of Anastasius and was one of the bishops exiled by Justin in 519. These Arabs were certainly *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, and it has been argued that they were most probably the Ghassānids.⁸ If so, then this would establish contact between Philoxenus, the ardent Monophysite missionary, and an Arab federate group. It is noteworthy that the addressee, called John, is ethnically an Arab. If he is the same as John, the bishop of the Arab group at Ḥuwwārīn, the fact becomes important in understanding the ecclesiastical policy of assigning to the Arab *foederati* clerics of the same ethnic background.

Whatever the process that converted the Ghassānids to the Monophysite confession was, there is no doubt that the pressure of the two powerful eccle-

⁶ On this, see below, 706–9.

⁷ For the letter and the identification, see André de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabboug: Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963), 216–17.

⁸ See below, 719–22.

siastics in whose jurisdiction the Ghassānids lived must have been efficacious.⁹ In 519 the Ghassānids appear as definitely Monophysite, and this could have happened only in the second decade of the century during the reign of Anastasius.

The Kindites

Byzantium concluded a *foedus* with Kinda in 502 as it did with the Ghassānids. The question arises as to whether conversion to Christianity was one of the conditions of the *foedus*, especially for that part of Kinda that was settled within the *limes*. The presumption is that it was converted, if it had not yet adopted Christianity earlier as a Peninsular power. As to its doctrinal persuasion, it was probably Chalcedonian, as was Ghassān's around 502. Whether Kinda adopted Monophysitism as Ghassān was to do later, in the second decade of the sixth century, is not clear. But those of Kinda who were settled in Palaestina Prima are likely to have remained Chalcedonian. Just as a strong Monophysite ecclesiastic, Severus of Antioch, was probably instrumental in the conversion of the Ghassānids to Monophysitism, so it was such ecclesiastics as Elias, the staunchly Chalcedonian Arab patriarch of Jerusalem, and St. Sabas, the celebrated monk of the Desert of Juda, who kept Palaestina Prima Chalcedonian, or mostly Chalcedonian, even during the reign of Anastasius. The Kindite Arabs who were settled in Palaestina Prima naturally were influenced by the Chalcedonian Christianity of the province and most probably remained within that doctrinal fold.¹⁰

The only member of the royal house of Kinda whose Christianity is attested beyond doubt is Hind, the Kindite princess, daughter of the same Kindite Arethas with whom Anastasius made the *foedus* of 502. She built a monastery in Hīra, the Lakhmid capital, in which was found the most important Christian Arab inscription of pre-Islamic times.¹¹ She had that inscription carved after the death of her husband, Mundīr, the famous Lakhmid king, and

⁹ Apparently Severus had the "ability to communicate with the native population of his patriarchate," and this is relevant to his influence on the Ghassānids; see Frend, *Rise*, 214. The immense influence of another pair of Monophysite clerics on the Ghassānids—Jacob Baradaeus and Paul the Black—is established and throws light on the influence of the earlier pair for which there are no extant sources.

¹⁰ In the 550s two Arab phylarchs fought with each other: Arethas the Monophysite Ghassānid and Aswad, most probably a Kindite, either the same who fought with Areobindus in 503 (below, note 11) or one related to him. The fight took place in Palaestina Prima but for unknown reasons. If the Kindite Aswad was Chalcedonian, this could throw some light on (although it would not fully explain) the animosity between the two phylarchs and consequently the fight; for these two phylarchs, see *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. E. Schwartz, TU 49 (Leipzig, 1939), p. 75 (hereafter *Kyrrillos*).

¹¹ For this inscription, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 24.

during the reign of her son ʿAmr.¹² The inscription raises the question of when Hind became a Christian, and what her doctrinal persuasion was. It is certain that she did not adopt Christianity in Ḥīra since her husband was a notorious pagan who reveled in anti-Christian outbursts. Consequently she must have been converted while still a Kindite princess, and if so her father, Arethas, must have been Christian too.¹³ She is supposed to have been married to Mundir during a period of eclipse for him brought about by her father,¹⁴ who for some time became the ruler of Ḥīra and replaced Mundir himself, in the 520s.¹⁵ She could have brought with her a Chalcedonian form of Christianity which she probably kept, or even a Monophysite one. The proud Kindite princess would not have converted to Nestorianism, the tolerated form of Christianity in Sasanid Persia and its prevailing form in Ḥīra.¹⁶

The Ghassānids and Palestine

While the Patriarchate of Antioch finally fell to Severus, a Monophysite of the deepest dye, who held office from 513 to 518, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem remained solidly Dyophysite principally owing to the resistance of a monk and a patriarch, St. Sabas and Elias of Jerusalem, both staunchly Chalcedonian, except for two years when Anastasius finally dethroned Elias and banished him to Ayla in 516. In view of this, it is unlikely that the Ghassānids had any foothold in Palestine, especially since, as pointed out earlier in this volume, Palaestina Prima was not their province but rather that of the Kindites. Yet there is that tantalizing toponym that appears in an Arabic source, namely, Dayr Ghassāneh, "the Monastery of the Ghassānids," which unmistakably points to a Ghassānid association.¹⁷ The question arises as to when it was established.

If the monastery dates to the reign of Anastasius, as is likely, it most probably was established in the second decade of his reign. In spite of the strongly Dyophysite character of Palestine, there were Monophysite pockets in it, represented by the monastery of Peter the Iberian (between Gaza and Maiouma), under whose influence Severus himself came when he was a monk at that monastery as he was to be also at the monastery of Romanus (near

¹² So it may be dated sometime between 554 and 569.

¹³ This is vouched for in her inscription in which she refers to herself as "the daughter of the servant of Christ."

¹⁴ See G. Olinder, *The Kings of Kinda* (Lund, 1927), 58, 62.

¹⁵ For this see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 253-54.

¹⁶ In addition to being a fine specimen of Christian Arabic in pre-Islamic times, the inscription is informative on four generations of Kindites, an important genealogical datum. She refers to herself as Hind, daughter of Ḥārith, son of ʿAmr, son of Ḥujr. So this segment of the genealogical line of royal Kinda is certain beyond doubt.

¹⁷ On Dayr Ghassāneh, see *Basic* I.1, 654-55. Dayr ʿAmr in Palestine may also have been a Ghassānid establishment, but it is less clearly Ghassānid than Dayr Ghassāneh.

Tekoa).¹⁸ The future patriarch of Antioch thus had strong Palestinian connections, and he kept his interest in Palestine even after his elevation to the see of Antioch, trying, with the help of other Monophysite clerics, to convince Anastasius to dethrone Elias, the Dyophysite patriarch of Jerusalem, which finally took place in 516. As explained in the previous section, the Ghassānids were won over to the Monophysite position in this decade during the patriarchate of Severus and under the combined influence of the two powerful Monophysites of the patriarchate, Severus and Philoxenus, who kept their interest in Palestine. The Ghassānids were geographically closer than both ecclesiastics to Palestine since they surrounded it from the three provinces of Palaestina Tertia, Arabia, and Palaestina Secunda and protected it against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus they must have been also interested in what, after all, was the Holy Land to them. It is therefore not unnatural to suppose that they effected a foothold in Palestine exactly in this period when the emperor, the patriarch of Antioch, and also that of Jerusalem, were all Monophysite.¹⁹ Perhaps Dayr Ghassāneh belongs to this period, and if Dayr ʿAmr, "the monastery of ʿAmr," is also Ghassānid, it may also belong to this period.

Discussion of the Arab presence in Palestine, that of the Ghassānids and Kindites, in this ecclesiastical context has led to the discussion of the position of the patriarch of Jerusalem in this period, Elias, himself a Rhomaic Arab. The Palestinian ecclesiastical scene thus presents a paradoxical situation where there was an Arab at the top ecclesiastical echelon in Palestine, while the powerful federates, the Ghassānids in Oriens, were moving in the orbit of the Pisidian Severus, sure sign that their Monophysitism was not related to their ethnic makeup. The Arab patriarch, who was discussed in detail in the previous volume of this series,²⁰ wrote an important chapter in the history of Palestine, the ecclesiastical fortunes of which he guided for some twenty-two years from 494 to 516. Among his many ecclesiastical establishments was the laying of the foundation of the New Church of the Mother of God in Jerusalem, later finished by Justinian. His Arab flock, then, did not include the Ghassānids and was limited to the phylarchs of the Parembolē in the Desert of Juda and most probably to the Kindites of Palaestina Prima.²¹

The zeal of the Ghassānids for Monophysitism, which became evident throughout the sixth century, is startling, and its roots must go back to this

¹⁸ On this, see Frend, *Rise*, 202. On the two Monophysite monasteries, see P. S. Vailhé, "Répertoire alphabétique des monastères de Palestine," *ROC* 5 (1900), 44–48.

¹⁹ Although the newly enthroned patriarch John (516–524) did not anathematize Chalcedon; *Rise*, 230.

²⁰ On Elias see *BAFIC*, 192–96, 210–12.

²¹ Elias was a firm and competent administrator; *ibid.*, 194–95. Yet Severus, his opponent, judges him "unstable and weak," possibly the expression of patriarchal rivalry and jealousy; see Frend, *Rise*, 230 note 3.

reign, that of Anastasius, to the powerful impact that the two strong Monophysite ecclesiastics, Severus and Philoxenus, had on them. In vain one tries to extract from the silent sources data concerning this impact, but two events in Oriens and the Patriarchate of Antioch could be considered relevant in this connection.

1. First there was the consecration of the cathedral of Bostra²² between September 512 and March 513. The Ghassānid phylarch most probably attended the consecration. The headquarters of the Ghassānids was the Provincia Arabia, and Bostra was its capital. The phylarch had important relations with the *dux* of Arabia who resided in Bostra. Furthermore, the Ghassānids had some important relations with this provincial capital, as the reign of Munḍir testifies late in the century. It is natural, therefore, to assume that on that important occasion the phylarch of the province, who was newly converted to the Monophysite faith, would have been invited, especially as the cathedral was dedicated to the military saints Bacchus and Sergius, and Leontius, the first of whom was the patron saint of the Ghassānids. That the Ghassānid phylarchs were invited to such events is attested by the invitation to the Ghassānid Munḍir around 580 to attend the consecration of the church at Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), a much less important consecration.²³

2. Then there was the splendid consecration of Severus himself on 16 November 513, at which Philoxenus officiated, when Severus delivered his cathedral homily in which he denounced Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo.²⁴ The Ghassānid phylarch must have been invited to attend the enthronement of the patriarch who, together with Philoxenus, must have been instrumental in winning over the Ghassānids to the Monophysite cause. Attendance at such consecrations—that of the cathedral of Bostra and of the patriarch of Antioch—must have impressed the Ghassānids and enhanced their attachment to their new confession.

Trilinguis Zabadaea

Almost more than a century ago, E. Sachau discovered, on the lintel of the west portal of a church in the western part of the ruins of Zabad, the famous trilingual inscription in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. The inscription commemorates the erection of a *martyrion* for St. Sergius in 512, and it contains a number of names written in the three languages with whom the erection of the church is associated. The inscription has been in the hands of a host of scholars who have tried to establish its text. In spite of the ingenuity

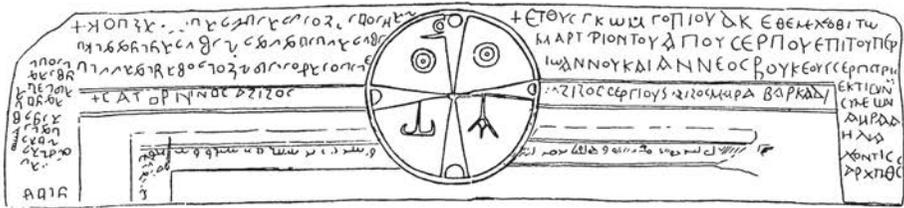
²² For the latest on the "cathedral" of Bostra and the problems related to it, see the various articles in *La Siria Araba da Roma a Bisanzio*, ed. R. F. Campanati (Ravenna, 1989).

²³ See BASIC I.1, 456–60.

²⁴ See de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabboug*, 78.

that has been exercised in the study of the text for many years by the best-known scholars in the field, the text of the inscription is not crystal clear. The various names that are mentioned in it are associated with different functions, the founder(s), the engraver, and the donors.²⁵

The Trilinguis Zabadaea Inscription (*IGLSYR*, II [1939], p. 177).



سريوس بن امرات صطو و صطو
وسلك لا سجدو و سجدو وسجدو

The relevant part of the inscription for the history of Arab-Byzantine relations is the Arab names and the light they throw on cultural matters in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the early part of the sixth century. According to E. Littmann, the Arabic inscription contains five names: (1) Sergius, son of Amat/Manaf; (2) Hunai³ (or Hannai³), son of Mar'alqais; (3) Sergius, son of Sa'd; (4) Sitr(?); and (5) Sergius.²⁶ The Arab name 'Aziz also appears in the Greek part of the inscription. In what way these Arab names are associated with the church is not entirely clear.

In spite of these uncertainties, it is possible to make the following observations on the Arabic names in the inscription.

1. The first question that arises concerns the legal status of these Arabs. Were they *foederati* or were they Rhomaic Arabs? There is no way of telling. The region of Zabad, not far from Hierapolis, is associated with the Arabs, and it has been argued that the Tanūkhids were possibly the *foederati* of By-

²⁵ The most complete account of the inscription may be found in *IGLSYR*, II (1939), pp. 176–81, with a facsimile of the inscription on p. 177 and an extensive bibliography on p. 178. See also *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1931), I, pp. 2–3, with some additional bibliographical items. Instead of Zebed, I have preferred the more correct orthography, Zabad.

²⁶ See E. Littmann, "Osservazioni sulle iscrizioni di Harran e di Zebed," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 4 (1911), 196.

zantium in the fourth century that were associated with it.²⁷ So it is not altogether impossible that they were federate Arabs who contributed something to the building of this church. Sharāḥīl, the phylarch of Ḥarrān, is attested epigraphically as having built a church dedicated to St. John. What might raise the suspicion that these may have been federate Arabs is the perfectly Arabian name of Mar'alqais (Imru' al-Qays), a name more associated with the Arabian Peninsula whence the *foederati* had hailed²⁸ than with Rhomaic Oriens.

2. The church is dedicated to St. Sergius. Zabad is situated in the province of Euphratensis where Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), the pilgrimage center, was located. Sergius was a military saint and one of the patron saints of the Roman army in Oriens, and of the Ghassānids, and he was equally venerated among the Arabs. Noteworthy is the fact that, according to Littmann, three of the Arabs mentioned in the inscription bore the name Sergius.

3. The inscription is important palaeographically, since it is considered to represent the earliest specimen of the Arabic script in Oriens. It antedates the Ḥarrān inscription and also the one found at Usays.²⁹ The Namāra inscription of A.D. 328 is written in the Nabataean script. The trilinguis of Zabad reflects the triculturalism of Oriens, and the employment of Arabic is striking in spite of the fact that the two languages of cultural dominance in the region, Greek and Syriac, are represented in the inscription. This reflects the strong Arab identity of those Arabs whose names were included in the inscription, sure sign that they were not completely assimilated into the Greek and Syriac cultural traditions of the region.

4. These Arabs kept their Arabic names, used patronymics *more Arabico*, and apparently insisted on having their names written in the Arabic script. The last clearly indicates that, although they were living in a multilingual ambience in which Greek and Syriac were used and were well known, these Arabs did not think it was superfluous to have their names written in Arabic, their own language. This is of some relevance to the problem of a simple Arabic liturgy and a lectionary for the use of the Arabs, especially the *foederati* of Oriens. If the Arabs of the Zabad inscription turn out to be not *foederati* but Rhomaic Arabs, the fact will be even more significant since it would argue that even the Rhomaic Arabs, who were subjected to cultural assimilation,

²⁷ See *BAFOC*, 403–4.

²⁸ The adoption of Christian names by the Christian Arabs does not argue for loss of identity. In the case of this inscription, the adoption of the name Sergius was natural, since he was the saint of the region. Cf. the adoption of the name by one of the associates of the Ghassānid Mundir, below, 959. On Sharāḥīl's church in Ḥarrān (*provincial Arabia*), see *BASIC* I.1, 326–31.

²⁹ For the Arabic inscription at Usays, see *ibid.*, 117–24.

did not entirely lose their sense of Arab identity. So, in addition to the palaeographic, there is this other important dimension to the inscription.

II. OUTSIDE THE *LIMES*

The Monophysite mission, or even missionary offensive, outside the frontiers of the empire was even more impressive and is better documented. It reached two important areas in the Semitic Orient, one in the middle Euphrates region in Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, and another in South Arabia.

Ḥīra

Two attempts were made to establish contact with Ḥīra, one in the first decade of the century and the other in the second. Both were attempts to reach the ruler as the most efficacious way of converting his people or region. The first is associated with the name of Philoxenus and the second with that of Severus.

The First Attempt

Sometime in the first decade of the sixth century, the Monophysite metropolitan of Hierapolis sent a letter to Abū Yaʿfur, the Lakhmid ruler of the Arab city of Ḥīra on the middle Euphrates, in which he discussed Nestorianism and the Christian faith from the point of view of Monophysitism. The letter had been under a cloud concerning both its attribution to Philoxenus and its authenticity, but most of the doubts were laid to rest in 1963 when Father A. de Halleux published his dissertation on Philoxenus and set on a firm foundation both the attribution and the authenticity of the letter, with some reservations on certain parts of it.³⁰ Recent research on Oriens Christianus, especially its Arab sector, has confirmed these conclusions³¹ beyond any shred of doubt, and this section upholds these conclusions and enriches them with new data. The letter of Philoxenus with its precious reference to Abū Yaʿfur, the ruler of Ḥīra, turns out to be a mine of information for the history of Arab Christianity in this period.

The most complete recension of the letter is that in the collection of the John Rylands Library in Manchester,³² which *inter alia* gives the correct orthography of the name of the ruler of Ḥīra as Abū Yaʿfur and mentions him

³⁰ See de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabboug*, 203–8, where the author discusses the manuscripts, editions, and literature on the letter.

³¹ This letter was noted in *Martyrs* (p. 271 note 3) but very cursorily since it was not the concern of that volume. The new data could have been at the disposal of ecclesiastical historians who dealt with this letter and with Philoxenus, if Nöldeke and Rothstein, the specialists on the Lakhmid dynasty almost a century ago, had been aware of it, but they were not.

³² See A. Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 9 (1925), 297–371; the relevant part that deals with Abū Yaʿfur and Ḥīra in its English version is on pp. 352–67.

some three times. From it the following data may be extracted. (1) Philoxenus apparently wrote two letters to Abū Yaʿfur, one of which has survived. (2) Philoxenus' letters were in response to letters sent by Abū Yaʿfur himself. (3) The opening paragraph of the letter says something about the virtues of Abū Yaʿfur, of which he enumerates three. (4) Abū Yaʿfur is referred to not as king but as *stratēlatēs*, the military term, and Ḥīra is referred to as Ḥīrat al-Nuʿmān, ḥertā d'Naʿmān.³³

The letter represents the earliest extant record of the attempt of the Monophysites to establish contact with Ḥīra and its rulers, an attempt that was repeated many times in the course of the sixth century. That there was a Monophysite problem in Sasanid Persia, including Ḥīra, at this time is known from other sources and may be summarized as follows. The Council of Seleucia in 488 established Nestorianism as the accepted form of Christianity in Persia. There followed apparently an assertion of Nestorian ascendancy in Persia with persecution of the Monophysites, involving Bar-Ṣauma, the Nestorian bishop of Nisibis, the flight of the Monophysites to Byzantine territory, and a letter from Emperor Anastasius to the Persian king Kawad on this point.³⁴

This is the background of Philoxenus' letter to Abū Yaʿfur. Philoxenus hailed from Persia, and he must have been familiar with the religious situation in that region and the role that Ḥīra could play in the protection of the Monophysites, his fellow confessionalists. Two centuries before, it protected the Manichaeans, and since then two of its kings had been associated with Christianity, Imru' al-Qays and Nuʿmān.³⁵ But above all, this was the style of the metropolitan of Hierapolis—to go to the top of the administrative level for protection, to the ruler himself in the capital. Although he did not succeed, since Abū Yaʿfur disappeared from the scene shortly after and Ḥīra remained a Nestorian stronghold till the very end, the letter does witness to the energy of Philoxenus in spreading his faith, which aimed at winning the important center of Ḥīra for Monophysitism, another instance of his missionary zeal which encompassed such distant centers of the Near East as Constantinople and also Najrān in South Arabia.

More important is the light the letter throws on Abū Yaʿfur and the history of the Lakhmid dynasty in this obscure period and on Christianity in that Arab center. All that the specialized monographs on Ḥīra³⁶ and the Lakhmids know of Abū Yaʿfur is that he was a Lakhmid appointed by Kawad after the death of King Nuʿmān from a wound he received before the walls of

³³ For these references, see *ibid.*, 352, 358, 367.

³⁴ See P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire* (Madison, Wisc., 1939), 29–30.

³⁵ See *BAFOC*, 32–34; *BAFIC*, 161–66.

³⁶ See Nöldeke, *PAS*, 169; Rothstein, *DLH*, 74–75.

Edessa in 503, and that he did not last long, since the famous Mundir III appears as the king of Ḥīra shortly after. Now this bald statement receives both confirmation and bright illumination from Philoxenus' letter.

1. Abū Ya'fur was a Lakhmid, but he did not belong to the ruling house, the Naṣrids or "the sons of Naṣr." This much had been known about him before the letter of Philoxenus was published. With this document and other data from the Arabic sources, Abū Ya'fur appears as the son of another Lakhmid, 'Alqama, who fathered another son, who had the emphatically Christian name of 'Abd al-Masīḥ.³⁷ Here then is a clan within the Lakhmids called Banū 'Alqama, "the sons of 'Alqama," which played an important role in the history of Christianity in Ḥīra.

2. The house of 'Alqama thus was already Christian when Abū Ya'fur appears as the ruler of Ḥīra. This is confirmed by the letter itself, as is clear from the opening paragraph.³⁸ The question of his Christian confession naturally arises. If his father, 'Alqama, was converted to Christianity, the natural presumption is that he was baptized into Nestorianism. This is a likely presumption, and equally likely is that his son Abū Ya'fur was born into or converted to the same doctrinal persuasion.

3. Yet the letter is startling in suggesting that Abū Ya'fur was not Nestorian. In the opening paragraph he is described as "one who delivers the lambs bought with the blood of Christ from the heresy of the Nestorians which is a second Jezebel, like Obadiah." Yet the implication is that he was a Christian; so to which Christian confession did he belong? The possibility must be entertained that he was won over to either the Chalcedonian or the Monophysite position. This should not be as startling as it sounds. It was in this period that there was a severe persecution of the Monophysites in Persia, and so much so that Emperor Anastasius had to intervene and sent representations to the Persian king, Kawad. It is not impossible that Abū Ya'fur may have been outraged by these persecutions conducted by the Nestorians, that he found it revolting and so wrote to the nearest ecclesiastic to him, Philoxenus at Hierapolis, for advice. Besides, he may have known that Philoxenus was a Persian. In support of this is the history of Aspebetos, the pagan Arab commander who was so outraged by the persecution of the Christians in Persia during the reign of Yazdgard that he defected to Byzantium and finally became the phylarch and bishop of the Parembole in Palestine.³⁹

4. This could have been the background of the letter that Abū Ya'fur sent to Philoxenus, asking him to inform him about this Christian confession that had outraged him by its severe persecution of fellow Christians. It should

³⁷ On this see below, note 47.

³⁸ See Mingana, "Christianity in Central Asia," 352.

³⁹ On Aspebetos see *BAFIC*, 40-49.

be remembered that Kawad himself had requested to be informed about Christianity and other religions, and so a statement was prepared for him and translated into Persian.⁴⁰ If his overlord did this, the vassal could easily have done the same. Kawad, as is well known, meandered from one religious fold to another, Mazdakism included; hence the period during which Abū Yaʿfur flourished serves as appropriate background for his conversion.

5. This raises the question of his choice as successor for Nuʿmān. It is possible that the anti-Christian outbursts of the latter⁴¹ may have alienated the Christian population in Ḥīra, as it did one of the chiefs in his army, and this may have led to some disturbances. So the appointment of the Christian Abū Yaʿfur in Ḥīra could have stabilized the situation. On the other hand, Munḍir, the son of Nuʿmān, may still have been a minor, and so Kawad simply appointed a competent warden from the same tribe of Lakhm until Munḍir reached his majority. It is noteworthy that he is not called king but by the military term *stratēlatēs* of the Ḥīrtā, which too suggests that Kawad did not appoint him king since kingship belonged to the house of Naṣr, not to the ʿAlqamids. This suggests that his appointment was temporary and contingent. The Naṣrid prestige is reflected in the name of Ḥīra which is called Ḥīra of Nuʿmān, the Naṣrid Lakhmid king. It should also be remembered that the war with Byzantium was still going on and that the Arabs of Ḥīra took an active part in it. Hence what was needed in Ḥīra after the death of Nuʿmān before the walls of Edessa was a warrior, a soldier who could keep Ḥīra well in hand.

6. In the *Chronicle* of Ṭabarī, so ably edited and interpreted by Nöldeke,⁴² Abū Yaʿfur appears as a name, that of the ruler of Ḥīra during this short interregnum. This opacity that surrounds him is illuminated by the letter, which provides three dimensions to his personality:⁴³ he is noble, pure and God-loving as Abraham; he gives his wealth in alms to the poor as Job did; and he delivers the Christians from the heresy of the Nestorians. The first presents him as a monotheist, the second is almost Arab in emphasizing his generosity; the third reflects his confessional affiliation and efforts against Nestorianism. If all this is an accurate picture of Abū Yaʿfur and not the wishful thinking of the writer of the letter, then this document has preserved

⁴⁰ On this see *Histoire Nestorienne*, ed. A. Scher, PO 7 (Paris, 1911), 126. In the letter, p. 358, Philoxenus speaks of the second letter of Abū Yaʿfur, in which he requests information from Philoxenus concerning the Akephaloi among the Monophysites. This does not seem a literary device on the part of Philoxenus, and so it is quite possible that Abū Yaʿfur had some interest in theology or religious sects, not unlike his master Kawad or the Ghassānid Arethas for whom, see below, 741 note 22 and p. 746–55.

⁴¹ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 13–17.

⁴² Nöldeke, *PAS*, 169.

⁴³ Mingana, "Christianity in Central Asia," 352.

a picture of an Arab Lakhmid chief around A.D. 500 not unlike that of Aspetos, another army commander whom the persecution of Christians in Persia outraged and forced to emigrate to Byzantine territory.

7. The historian of the Lakhmid dynasty, G. Rothstein, was at a loss to explain the disappearance of Abū Yaʿfur from the scene in Ḥīra after such a short interregnum.⁴⁴ The letter now provides some satisfactory explanation for this. Here was a vassal of the Persian king carrying on a correspondence concerning the Christian faith, that of the enemy Byzantium, with a metropolitan of Hierapolis so close to the Persian frontier. This must have made him suspect in the eyes of the Persian authorities, and the Nestorians would have lost no time in denouncing him as a traitor. Kawad dismissed him, and this may be confirmed by the appointment of Munḍir III who celebrates his reign pointedly by the invasion of the Holy Land, thus emphasizing that a non-Christian ruler was again in the saddle in Ḥīra, like his father Nuʿmān.

This examination of the letter of Philoxenus to Abū Yaʿfur has further confirmed its essential authenticity, or at least that part of it that deals with Christianity in Ḥīra and the Land of the Two Rivers. The Syriac source had confirmed the reliability of the Arab historian Hishām on the Lakhmids,⁴⁵ and has brightly illuminated the history of Ḥīra and the Lakhmid dynasty in this short period in the first decade of the sixth century. A clan within the Lakhmids has thus been identified as the Christian clan of Banū ʿAlqama, the sons of ʿAlqama, to be added to others in Ḥīra such as "the house of Ayyūb."⁴⁶ Their Christianity is confirmed onomastically and epigraphically. According to the genealogies, this ʿAlqama had two sons (at least); one is Abū Yaʿfur, the other ʿAbd al-Masīḥ; the latter had a son called Ḥanẓala, who built a monastery at Ḥīra in which a Christian Arabic inscription was found,⁴⁷ all of which is relevant to the study of Arabic as one of the languages of Oriens Christianus in pre-Islamic times.

The Second Attempt

Some ten years after Philoxenus' effort to convert Abū Yaʿfur of Ḥīra to Monophysitism, another attempt was made, this time in 513 by Severus, the newly consecrated Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, who according to ecclesiastical historians sent two bishops to Munḍir III of Ḥīra in order to convert

⁴⁴ Rothstein, *DLH*, 75.

⁴⁵ That is, in the case of Abū Yaʿfur, who appears chronologically in the letter exactly where Hishām placed him.

⁴⁶ On this house, see *BASIC* I.1, 315–18.

⁴⁷ On Dayr Ḥanẓala and its inscriptions, see Bakrī, *Muʿjam ma Istaʿjam*, ed. M. al-Saqqā (Cairo, 1947), II, 577, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1956), II, 507. In addition to Dayr Ḥanẓala, there is also Dayr ʿAlqama, named after the father of Abū Yaʿfur, for which see Bakrī, *op. cit.*, 590. Both will be discussed in *BASIC* II.

him. Mundir, however, confounded and embarrassed the two bishops sent by Severus and remained "orthodox" in faith. The authenticity of this report has been much discussed, and its latest treatment goes back to the early 1970s.⁴⁸ The subject may now be discussed anew in light of recent research, especially the detailed analysis of the letter of Philoxenus.

1. Of the many authors who report Severus' mission, Theodore Anagnostes (Lector) is the main source from whom all the rest derive.⁴⁹ It is especially important to emphasize this because Theodore was a contemporary, and so his report may be considered reliable.⁵⁰

2. A mission to convert the powerful ruler of Ḥīra is very much in consonance with what is known about Severus, the zealous and dedicated Monophysite patriarch who had just been consecrated to the see of Antioch and who was anxious to convert the world around him to his confession.

3. A close relationship obtained between Philoxenus and Severus, and in fact the former was instrumental in elevating Severus to the patriarchate and took part in his consecration. The two clerics were in communication and were close to each other geographically. It is natural to suppose that Philoxenus informed Severus of his previous efforts to convert Abū Ya'fur, and it is quite possible that the initiative to renew efforts to convert Ḥīra and its ruler may have come from Philoxenus. It is tempting to think that Philoxenus may himself have been one of the two bishops who went to Ḥīra to convert Mundir since he had hailed from Persia and was already familiar with the Ḥīran situation through his correspondence with Abū Ya'fur.

4. Severus' interest in Ḥīra is attested from other sources, one of his own letters addressed to two clerics, Jonathan and Samuel, and "all the rest of the Orthodox who assembled in the church of the city of Anbār and in the church of Ḥīra of Nu'mān."⁵¹

So the Monophysite mission to Ḥīra in 513 may be accepted as historical and interpreted as an ambitious attempt on the part of Severus to win over to

⁴⁸ See the present writer in *Martyrs*, 269–72, where the arguments for Mundir's Christianity are set forth with light from the new letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, published and studied there.

⁴⁹ See *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte*, ed. G. C. Hansen, GCS 54 (Berlin, 1971), 147. For the other sources on this episode, see *Martyrs*, 269 note 2, to which may be added Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PG 147, Book XVI, col. 193.

⁵⁰ For those who rejected the account, see *Martyrs*, 269 note 5, to whom may now be added Hansen in *Theodoros Anagnostes*, 147. The objections he advanced may be answered as follows: (a) the Arab chief whom Severus wanted to convert was an important person, rightly called in one of the sources (Victor Tunnunensis, *ibid.*, line 4) *Saracenorum rex*; but the sources know of no one with the name of Mundir in this period other than the Lakhmid king; (b) this person could not have lived "im Bereich des römischen Limes," since all the phylarchs of the Romans were already Christian in this period.

⁵¹ See *Letters of Severus*, PO 12, pp. 216–17.

Monophysitism the powerful ruler of Ḥīra, the most important Arab center in the Fertile Crescent.

The report, however, raises questions about Muṇḍir's religion at the time of this mission. In the early 1970s, and in light of the discovery of a new letter by Simeon of Bēth-Arshām in which there is a reference to Muṇḍir swearing by the Gospel, it was suggested that Muṇḍir, the pagan and anti-Christian ruler of Ḥīra, was at one time in his life a Christian, and it was also suggested that his Christianity must have been Nestorian.⁵² But in view of that reference to Muṇḍir in the ecclesiastical account as a Chalcedonian, it is not impossible that Muṇḍir was converted to the Dyophysite position for a short time in this period and was already such when Severus' two bishops arrived at his court. Support for this could come from the fact that Muṇḍir was married to a Christian Kindite princess, Hind, the daughter of the Kindite king, Arethas, with whom Byzantium concluded the *foedus* of 502. And it has been argued that Kinda's conversion to Christianity at that time was to Dyophysite Christianity since it happened before Anastasius became openly Monophysite in the second decade of this century.⁵³ So there was a Christian at Muṇḍir's court, his own wife, and it is possible that she had influenced him to become Christian for a short time and that this was his persuasion when the two Monophysite bishops arrived and found him a Dyophysite as the ecclesiastical historian reports.

This is all that can be said in support of the view expressed by the ecclesiastical historians who reported the episode, namely, that Muṇḍir was a Chalcedonian at this time. However, this view encounters a difficulty deriving from the uncertainty that attends the date of Muṇḍir's marriage to the Kindite princess Hind. As expressed earlier in this volume, it was possibly in the 520s.⁵⁴ If so, this would invalidate the argument, but no certainty attaches to this dating. So chances are equal that Muṇḍir at this time was either Chalcedonian or Nestorian, and either would do as a background for the statement in the letter of Simeon that he swore by the Gospel sometime in the second decade of the sixth century. What matters here is the mission of Severus to Muṇḍir, which, as has been argued, must be accepted as historical, unsuccessful as it was.

Muṇḍir was no theologian, and his rejection of the overtures of the two Monophysite bishops was certainly not on theological grounds. He was the vassal of the Persian king, and the latter would not have tolerated from his vassal the acceptance of a form of Christianity that in the second decade of the

⁵² See *Martyrs*, 270–72.

⁵³ On Kinda's Christianity and on Hind, see above, 696–97, and *BASIC II*, forthcoming.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

sixth century was the official Christianity of the secular enemy, Byzantium. Chalcedonian Christianity was bad enough from the point of view of the Persian king and the Zoroastrian establishment.⁵⁵

Mundir reverted to paganism late in the decade, and this reversion may be attributed to pressure from his overlord Kawad who looked on the Lakhmid king as a convenient ally for expressing his displeasure with Christian Byzantium.⁵⁶ Booty from the rich Christian shrines of Oriens must have appealed to the predatory instincts of the Lakhmid king, but rifling Christian shrines would have been impossible for him as a Christian. His Christianity was very thin to start with, and once the Persian king signaled his disapproval of his client's religious persuasion, it was not difficult for the latter to revert to paganism.

South Arabia

Although the Monophysite mission to convert the Lakhmids of Ḥira failed, it was signally successful in South Arabia. This has been treated in detail for the reign of Anastasius in the previous volume of this series, *BAFIC*,⁵⁷ and more will be said on it in *BASIC II* in the discussion of western Arabia. But, as the conversion of South Arabia to Monophysitism was the work of Philoxenus, it is only fitting that it should be briefly treated here, after his efforts to convert Ḥira which were discussed in the previous section, in order to indicate the full extent of his activity in the propagation of that confession. South Arabia represents the farthest limit of this activity in the Semitic Orient.

Ḥimyar

Knowledge of a Monophysite mission to Ḥimyar in South Arabia is owed to John Diacrinomenus, the Monophysite writer who said that his own maternal uncle, Silvanus, was dispatched to Ḥimyar in the reign of Anastasius. This valuable but bald statement has left many questions unanswered concerning this Silvanus, such as the occasion for his dispatch, the year, and his see. No definite answer can be given to these questions, and it was suggested that his

⁵⁵ Of the Monophysite mission to convert Mundir, Frend (*Rise*, 229 and note 2) says: "In the South, Severus' emissaries failed miserably to convince some important Arab tribes of the Syrian frontier that Monophysitism was a satisfactory belief." This must have been a *lapsus calami* on the part of the distinguished historian of Monophysitism since the object of the mission was Mundir the Lakhmid king of Ḥira, on the lower or middle Euphrates and *not* "Arab tribes" in the south "on the Syrian frontier."

⁵⁶ Mundir's Christianity, if indeed he was a Chalcedonian, must also have become unacceptable to his Persian overlord, in view of the return of Byzantium to the Chalcedonian fold on the accession of Justin I in 518.

⁵⁷ See *BAFIC*, 360–81, 401–4.

episcopal see was either Mukhā or Zafār itself, the capital, or possibly Najrān. Whether Philoxenus was involved in this missionary effort is not stated. But in view of his interest in the Arab and Arabian area, it is not unlikely that he was behind the dispatch of Silvanus to South Arabia.⁵⁸

Ḥaḍramawt

The Monophysite presence in South Arabia is also attested in Ḥaḍramawt and is associated with another important figure in the history of the Monophysite church, namely, John of Tella. According to the new letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, one of the martyrs in Ḥaḍramawt around the year 520 was a presbyter by the name of Elias, who had been a monk at the convent of Bēth Mār-Abrahām near Callinicum and who was ordained presbyter by John of Tella. Another presbyter who was also martyred in Ḥaḍramawt was Thomas who had been a monk at the monastery of Bēth Mār-Antiochina in Edessa.⁵⁹ So here are two presbyters assigned to Ḥaḍramawt, who had hailed from the Monophysite world of Oriens, one of whom, Elias, had been ordained by John of Tella. Although it is not stated that John of Tella was involved in his dispatch to, or his presence in, Ḥaḍramawt, the chances are that he was, and if so, John of Tella may be added to the list of Monophysite ecclesiastics who were active in the mission to Arabia.⁶⁰

Najrān

More important than the Monophysite presence in Ḥimyar and Ḥaḍramawt was the Arab city of Najrān, situated in the northern part of South Arabia. A flood of light has been thrown on it for the reign of Anastasius by the new letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, which solves the problem of the inception of its episcopate. This document clearly states that Philoxenus consecrated two bishops of Najrān: Paul I, the first bishop that Najrān received, and Paul II, consecrated bishop of Najrān sometime after Paul I was martyred in Zafār.⁶¹

This report on the Monophysite presence in Najrān calls for the following observations.

1. Najrān had been converted to Christianity in the first half of the fifth century by Ḥayyān, one of its merchants, who brought the Christian Gospel

⁵⁸ Ibid., 376–81, 401–4.

⁵⁹ On this, see *Martyrs*, 45 and notes on pp. 68–71. The ecclesiastics were martyred in Ḥaḍramawt ca. 520, but their ministry in Ḥaḍramawt goes back earlier, to the reign of Anastasius.

⁶⁰ E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VIe siècle*, CSCO, Subsidia 127 (Louvain, 1951), 51–52.

⁶¹ See *Martyrs*, 46.

from Hīra before the birth of the Monophysite movement. But it was in the reign of Anastasius and through the vision of Philoxenus that Najrān acquired its strong Monophysite character, which determined the confessional stance of South Arabia for a century till the rise of Islam.⁶²

2. How this came about is not entirely clear, but it has been suggested that the Ghassānids in Oriens, who became the zealous Monophysites among the Arabs, were partly responsible for this shift in doctrinal persuasion in Najrān. The Ghassānids were related to the Arabs of Najrān and had close ties with them, and it is not impossible that they were involved in carrying the Monophysite flame there.⁶³

3. The consecration of a bishop for Najrān is a clear indication that Christianity had advanced far enough in that city to require an episcopal presence. The Monophysite church wanted a center in South Arabia that it could consider its firm foothold in that region whence Christianity might spread, and Najrān clearly qualified as such since Christianity was introduced to it relatively early in the first half of the fifth century.

4. The success of Philoxenus' efforts in establishing a strong Monophysite presence in Najrān is reflected in various ways: in the rise of an organized hierarchy for the church in Najrān whose names have been preserved in the new letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, in the international character of many of the clerics who formed this hierarchy,⁶⁴ and in native Najrānites, acting as missionaries or ministers of the faith in other parts of South Arabia, such as the presbyter Thomas who died a martyr in Ḥaḍramawt.⁶⁵

The conversion of South Arabia to the Monophysite confession of Christianity was a major triumph for Monophysitism and for Philoxenus.⁶⁶ This was an event of the first importance in the history of the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula. As far as Monophysitism is concerned, it represented a major conquest, that of a vast province, a triumph that was to be repeated later in the century, when Nubia across the Red Sea was won over to Monophysitism in the reign of Justinian, thus making the whole of the valley of the Nile a Monophysite valley, after Egypt and Ethiopia had also been won over to the same doctrinal persuasion.

⁶² See *BAFIC*, 373–76.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 373–74.

⁶⁴ See *Martyrs*, 64.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁶ To whom may be added John of Tella and possibly Simeon of Bēth-Arshām who, in the reign of Justin, became the spirit behind the scenes, campaigning for avenging the martyrs of South Arabia. But he had been active before and may have been in touch with Philoxenus since he was also, like the bishop of Hierapolis, a Persian. It is also tempting to think that the two bishops who were sent to the Lakhmid Mundir in 513 may have been the two Persians, Philoxenus and Simeon.

III. APPENDIX

"The Camp of Anasartha": A Cautionary Note

In one of his letters,¹ the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, Severus (513–518), addresses the monks of the monastery of Mār-Isaac concerning the consecration of one of them, Stephen, as bishop of "the camp of Anasartha" in Syria Prima. The men of the "camp" had submitted a list to him, and he chose Stephen, whom he recommends strongly. The following three passages are from Severus' letter as translated by E. W. Brooks.²

1. "But now I am writing to your love of God about a matter which is for the common benefit, and tends to the advancement of the right faith and the preservation and extension of the holy churches of God in the East."

2. "The men of the camp of Anasartha by their *psephismata* proposed various persons in order that a bishop might be ordained for them; and I for my part determined that we would ordain the religious father Stephen, who is adorned with character and with faith, and, if one may so say, with all the excellencies of virtues, bishop for the aforesaid camp."

3. "I have chosen the religious father Stephen as being one of those mentioned in the *psephisma* by those who came from the aforesaid camp: and for us to introduce someone else not included in the *psephisma* is impossible."

Severus' letter, which in its English version speaks of the "men of the camp of Anasartha," could easily lead the student of Arab-Byzantine relations into thinking that these were federate Arabs who had asked Severus to consecrate a bishop for them. It is quite unlikely that regular Roman soldiers in a camp would have asked Severus to do this, but Arab federates might very well have. If so, the letter assumes considerable importance since it would refer not to the Ghassānids, about whom much is known in the sixth century, but to other, lesser known Arab federate groups who were encamped in the northern provinces of Oriens of which Syria Prima was one.

Exciting as it would be if "the men of the camp of Anasartha" turned out to be Arab federates, it is *not* quite certain that they in fact were. Severus wrote in Greek, but his letter has survived only in a Syriac version. The Syriac of this version is clearly a translation of the phrase in Greek, and it presents problems to the translator, both the anonymous one who turned the Greek into Syriac and Brooks who turned the Syriac into English. The only course is to state what can be said for "the camp of Anasartha" as an Arab federate camp and then to examine an alternative translation of the Syriac phrase with reference to the Greek original or what the Greek original might have been.

A

In support of, and in relation to, what Brooks implied by his translation of the Syriac phrase as "the men of the camp of Anasartha" as Arab federates, the following observations may be made.

¹ See letter 29 in *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus*, ed. and trans. E. W. Brooks (London, 1903), vol. II, part I, pp. 90–92.

² For the three passages, see *ibid.*, p. 90, line 23–p. 91, line 11; p. 92, lines 5–9.

1. The first question that arises is the identity of these Arab *foederati* encamped near Anasartha. The city is associated with the Arabs and the Arab federates, and this is attested in Greek inscriptions.³ An Arab federate group encamped outside the walls of Anasartha is likely to have been the Tanūkhids. This was one of their sites in the fourth century, while the Salīhids were in the south of Oriens. Also in the south were the Ghassānids in this period, before the conferment of the supreme phylarchate on the Ghassānid Arethas around 530.

2. Noteworthy is the fact that the troops in the camp want a bishop of their own choosing from a list they have voted for. This could be another indication of the Arab and Tanūkhid identity of this group. In the fourth century the federate queen Mavia insisted that a holy man, Moses, be consecrated as her bishop,⁴ and so do those of “the camp of Anasartha” in the sixth century.

3. This raises the question of the ethnic background of the bishop: was he Arab? The precedent set by Mavia in the fourth century could suggest that this became the rule in choosing bishops for the Arab *foederati*. The election and consecration of the Arab Theodore,⁵ the bishop of the Ghassānids around 540, who oversaw the entire Arab area, gives further support for this view.

4. The candidate that Severus chose was a monk of the monastery of Mār-Isaac named Stephen.⁶ It is noteworthy that the convent was in an Arab area, since Chalcidicē was a desert region inhabited by Arabs/Saracens. It does not necessarily follow that their inmates were Arab, but it could argue that at least some of them were Arab, and Stephen may have been one of them. Stephen is a non-Arab name, but this does not necessarily argue against his Arabness, since the Arabs shed their Arabic names when they became monks or priests. And some Arabs are attested as having assumed the name Stephen, such as the *begoumenos* of the lavra of St. Euthymius in the Desert of Juda in the fifth century.⁷

To the above arguments may be added Severus' attitude toward the choice of Stephen. Severus was a capable ecclesiastical administrator who, as the first passage indicates, was anxious to spread the Monophysite faith. As he wanted converts, he must have thought it perfectly appropriate for winning over the federate Arabs of Anasartha (who at the time were probably Chalcedonian) to accede to their wishes to choose one from the list they had submitted; and as has already been argued, they most probably would have wanted as their bishop an Arab who understood their language.

The letter is valuable as it reflects the concern of Severus for spreading the Monophysite faith in Oriens and elsewhere. He speaks of the “advancement of the

³ See *BAFOC*, 222–38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 152–58.

⁵ On Theodore see below, 761–68, 850–60.

⁶ For the convent of St. Isaac of Gabbūla, see W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, part II (London, 1871), p. 756. For the bishopric of Gabbūla in Chalcidicē in Syria Prima, see Devreesse, *PA*, 165.

⁷ See *BAFIC*, 210–12. Stephen was also the name of the Arab architect of the monastery of Mount Sinai during the reign of Justinian; he hailed from Arab Ayla; see below, 972 note 18.

right faith and the preservation and extension of the holy churches of God in the East." In this case, the advancement and extension involve the Arabs, whom he was able to convert to a large extent. The Ghassānids were won to the Monophysite faith in this period, and he sent emissaries to Mundīr, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, to attempt to convert him. And so it is within this framework of an active missionary activity among the powerful Arab *foederati* in Oriens that his recommendations for the consecration of Stephen among the Arab federates of Anasarthā has to be viewed. His insistence on the consecration of Stephen reveals the capable ecclesiastical hierarch who knew the role that the *foederati* would play in the support of the Monophysite church. So in the letter he appears understanding of their desire for a bishop of their own choice and adamant in seeing their wishes carried out. The sequel justified his expectation, since the federate Arabs turned out to be the pillars of strength of the Monophysite movement throughout the sixth century.

B

In spite of the case that can be made for the Arab federate status of "the men of the camp of Anasarthā," it is by no means certain that these were actually Arab federates. A close look at the Syriac original, itself a translation from the Greek, suggests an alternative and better translation of the phrase, which in Syriac reads *qastrā Ḥanasartā*.⁸

1. The first reaction to the translation of the phrase *qastrā Ḥanasartā* by "the camp of Anasarthā" is that the translation reflects the genitive relation. But the Syriac is not couched in any of the three ways in which the genitive relation is expressed in Syriac: by the employment of the emphatic state with the preposition *d*; by the employment of the construct state; and by the employment of both the possessive pronominal suffix and the preposition *d*. So the translation of the Syriac phrase should not have been expressed through the genitive relation, "the camp of Anasarthā."⁹

2. Then there is the term "camp." The Syriac original has *qastrā*, and this normally means in Syriac not camp but fortified place;¹⁰ it is a Latinism in Greek and a Graecism in Syriac. This raises the question of what the original Greek of Severus was and what he meant by it. There are two possibilities: he could have used it in the normal sense of a fortified place or as a Latin term, *castra*, which indeed means "camp." Severus knew Latin, since he studied it in Alexandria, and later in Beirut he studied law, the language of which was Latin. The chances are that he used it not in the Latin sense of "camp" but in the new sense the term had acquired after its naturalization in Byzantine Greek—fortress, fortified place.

3. Further confirmation of this derives from the syntax of the phrase. The Syriac translator surely must have known the two languages as well. As he did *not* use one of the three ways of expressing the genitive relation, the conclusion is inevitable that

⁸ The vocalization of Ḥanasartā is uncertain; its orthography in Arabic is *Ḳhunāširat*.

⁹ For the phrase in Syriac, see *Select Letters of Severus*, ed. Brooks, vol. I, part I (London, 1902), p. 101, line 15.

¹⁰ That *qastrā* is a Graecism (κάστρα) in the letter is noted by Brooks, *op. cit.*, vol. II, part I, p. 91 note 1, who also noted others, such as *psephismata*.

"Anasartha," which comes after *qastrā*, is not the genitive but is simply in apposition to it, and the phrase should be translated "the *qastrā*, the fortress Anasartha," identifying the *qastrā* with the town.

4. Objections to the identification of *qastrā* with Anasartha could disappear when it is realized that Anasartha was on the *limes* and so was a fortress, a fortified place, and as a town on the *limes*, was referred to as such. A passage in Malalas indeed describes Anasartha as τὸ Ἀνάσαρθον κάστρον.¹¹

5. Another objection may be the use of the plural or what seems to be plural, namely, Syriac *qastrā* (the Greek plural κάστρα) and not singular *qastrōn* (Greek singular κάστρον), the term that describes Anasartha in Malalas. But although it transliterates plural κάστρα, Syriac *qastrā* is considered a grammatical singular. Besides, syntax is decisive. Since what is involved is not the genitive relation but apposition, *qastrā* must be construed as singular, the same as the grammatical singular "Anasartha." The notion of apposition also disposes of the possibility, or makes it very remote, that *qastrā* transliterates Latin *castra*, plural in form but singular in meaning, "camp," since Anasartha is not a camp (*castra*) but a fortified city, κάστρον.

6. A final objection may be that Stephen as the bishop of Anasartha does not appear in the list of Monophysite bishops exiled by Justin in 519. This could argue that he was not a bishop of the city of Anasartha but of the Arab federate camp, which was not deemed important enough to be mentioned in the list of exiled bishops, as was John of Evaria, who was the bishop of the Ghassānids, the dominant Arab federate group, and who was indeed mentioned.¹²

The omission is noteworthy but does not necessarily invalidate the foregoing reasoning, which rests on the correct transliteration of the language of the crucial Syriac phrase. Stephen was only *recommended* for consecration as bishop; he may not have actually attained the episcopal dignity, or he may have succumbed to the solicitations of the Chalcedonians and reconverted to their position; hence his non-inclusion in the list of exiled Monophysite bishops. And there is the possibility that the list of exiled bishops as preserved in later Syriac sources is not complete.

This attempt to recover the precise Greek phrase that Severus used involving Anasartha in his letter has yielded a conclusion that does not square well with Brooks' translation of the Syriac phrase as "the camp of Anasartha," with all that such a translation implies. Important as it is to recover data on the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati* in the sixth century, especially when they are non-Ghassānids, it is necessary to guard against misapprehension of the phrase in the English version. Thus one must exclude it as evidence for Arab federate Christianity in the environs of Anasartha in Syria Prima in the early part of the sixth century. Federate Christianity may have existed there at that time, but if so, it must rest on other evidence.¹³

¹¹ Quoted by Honigmann, in "Studien zur Notitia Antiochena," *BZ* 25 (1925), 76.

¹² For the list and for John of Evaria (Ḥuwwārin), see below, 717–18.

¹³ A. Vööbus completely misunderstood the phrase and wrote of *qastrā* as if it was *parembole*; see his *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, III, CSCO 500, Subsidia 81 (Louvain, 1988), 235.

X

The Reign of Justin I (518–527)

The reign of Justin I opens the first phase of the middle period, the long period of tensions and confrontations that characterized Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, the foundations of which had been laid in the reign of Anastasius when the Ghassānids were won over to Monophysitism. The ecclesiastical history of the reign will be briefly outlined in order to serve as a backdrop for the detailed study of the Arab involvement.

The ruling dynasty, that of Justin, returns Byzantium to the Chalcedonian fold and to reunion with Rome. This results in disunity in the Orient and the disestablishment of the Monophysite church after the short honeymoon during the last five years of Anastasius' reign. The Orient is convulsed by a thorough overhauling of the hierarchy on both the patriarchal and episcopal levels. A second revolution, similar to that effected by Anastasius ca. 510, now takes place. The three Monophysite patriarchs of Oriens and also of Constantinople are dethroned, and Chalcedonians are consecrated and installed. The Monophysite bishops of Oriens are expelled and sent into exile. The emperor issues edicts against the heretics, at the beginning and the end of his reign, during which the persecution of the Monophysites goes through various stages.¹

Thus the world of the Monophysites collapses over their heads. The Ghassānids, staunch supporters of the movement, are adversely affected, as repercussions of the sharp turn in imperial ecclesiastical policy are felt both within the empire, by the Ghassānids, and by various other communities without. The entire Near East is affected by it. These repercussions and the extraordinary events to which they led have been treated in articles published in various journals.² Hence the present chapter will concentrate on (1) bring-

¹ The most detailed account of the ecclesiastical policy of the reign of Justin may be found in two works: A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), and Irun Engelhardt, *Mission und Politik in Byzanz* (Munich, 1974). Both are excellent works for the reign in general. This chapter, which concentrates on the Arab involvement, supplements what these two works say on the religious profile of Justin's reign. Engelhardt also treats the ecclesiastical policy of Justinian; Chapter XI in the present volume will supplement *Mission und Politik* for that reign, too.

² The present writer has paid special attention to these repercussions and events in articles collected in *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the Rise of Islam* (London, 1988).

ing together what has been separated, in a brief presentation; (2) treating what has not been previously treated in detail; (3) and including repercussions outside the empire, in Arabia and the middle Euphrates region.

I. WITHIN THE EMPIRE

The principal problem for investigation is the withdrawal of the strongly Monophysite Ghassānids from the service of Byzantium. This has been argued for in detail in Chapter II of this volume, where important new documents have been laid under contribution. There remains the examination of the problems relevant to ecclesiastical history, and the first is that of their bishop, whether or not he was John of Evaria, mentioned in the list of bishops exiled by Justin.

The Ghassānids: John, Bishop of Evaria

In the list of Monophysite bishops exiled in 519, one year after Justin I came to power,³ there is reference to a bishop of the Arabs of Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), who was exiled and died in exile in Ḥarlan in the region of Damascus: "Et Ioannes episcopus Zizae Arabum τῶν Ḥawarīn exiit et mortuus est in exilio Harlan in agro Damasceno."⁴ References to the same bishop occur in the chronicles of Dionysius of Tell-Maḥre⁵ and of Michael the Syrian.⁶ The quotation presents a textual problem concerning the word *Zizae* as a description of these Arabs.

J. B. Chabot, in his Latin translation just quoted and in his note on the same, takes *Zizae* as an adjective from *Ziza* which he describes, quoting Ptolemy, as "*Ziza urbs in Arabia Petraea.*" On this basis he interprets "*Zizae Arabum τῶν Ḥawarīn*" as "*Zizaeorem Arabum qui sunt in Hawarin.*" E. Honigmann accepts the derivation from *Ziza* and adds that these Arabs were perhaps a detachment that had been previously stationed at *Ziza* in the province of Arabia.⁷ These interpretations cannot be accepted. There is no evidence whatsoever that an Arab detachment was stationed at *Ziza*, and the

³ For the list of the exiled Monophysite bishops in 519, see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 145–48; for the expulsion of the Monophysite bishops and the ecclesiastical policy of Justin, see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 225–29, 232–53.

⁴ *Chronicon ad Annum Domini 846 pertinens*, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, vol. 4 (2) (Paris, 1903), *Chronica Minora*, versio 4, ed. J. B. Chabot, p. 172. Ḥuwwārīn rather than Hawarin is the accepted orthography of the toponym in the Arabic sources.

⁵ *Chronicon Anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, vol. 2, textus, ed. J. B. Chabot (Louvain, 1933), p. 18: the chronicle merely says "and John of Hawarin, and he died in exile."

⁶ *Chronique*, ed. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1901), II, text, p. 267, trans. p. 172: "Jean, évêque des moines arabes de Hawarin." This bishop, John of Evaria, has been discussed previously in this volume but not in an ecclesiastical context; see *BASIC* I.1, 458.

⁷ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 98–99, 147.

Notitia Dignitatum which Honigmann refers to has, not the Arabs stationed there, but, as he himself notes, the "Equites Dalmatae Illyriciani." Even if an Arab detachment had been stationed at Ziza, it is impossible that that detachment would have acquired the adjective *Zizae* to describe itself, and that the adjective persisted and continued to be applied to it after it had left Ziza and settled in Hawarin. The Arabs in the *Notitia* are referred to as *Arabes* or *Saraceni*, sometimes more narrowly defined with reference to their tribal affiliations such as *Thamudeni* and not to the place where they were stationed.⁸ Grammatically, too, *Zizae* should come after *Arabum* if it were a restrictive adjective from *Ziza*, and not before it, as it does in the text. In his French translation of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, where the same reference to this bishop of the Arabs occurs, Chabot translates *Zizae* as "moines," clearly after emending *Zizae* into *dayrāyē*. This is transcriptionally probable, but monasteries were not normally administered by bishops; it is possible, however, that in this case the monastery was.

A third possibility must be entertained: that these Arabs over whom John was bishop could have been *foederati*. The word *Ṭayāyē* is the regular word used by Syriac authors, the equivalent of *Saraceni/Saraceni* of the Byzantine writers, Latin and Greek, and its employment in the Syriac text indicates that the Arabs in question were not *cives*, the Rhomaic *Arabes*, but the *foederati*. The possibility that these Arabs were *foederati* makes possible a return to *Zizae* for an emendation. Since the *foederati* received a subsidy from Byzantium, it is natural to look for a word that describes them in this capacity and that is transcriptionally possible. The technical term for the subsidy was *annona*, but the Syriac writers were not careful and their Graecisms are often inaccurate. There is a word that expressed the same meaning as *annona*, namely *diaria*, a Latin technical term that passed into Greek too, and was used in the sense of *stipendium* in the *Novels*⁹ and, what is more, was used by the Syriac writers¹⁰ who simply transliterated it. The word *Zizae* of the Syriac text could thus be *diarāyē*, a plural of an adjective formed from *diaria*, meaning "those who receive the *diaria*." The question now arises as to who these *foederati* were of whom John was bishop? Were they Ghassānids or some other Arab group of *foederati*?

⁸ See *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), 59, 68, 81. *Thamudeni* appears on p. 59; sometimes an adjectival form such as *Illyriciani* appears in the *Notitia*, but the place from which they derive is usually well known or important, not like *Ziza*, which is a small and relatively insignificant locality.

⁹ For *diaria* as a Graecism, see Justinian's *Novellae*, 126, cap. 16: ἐνὸς ἐνιαυτοῦ διάρια μὴ ὑπερβαίνουσας.

¹⁰ It occurs in Jacob of Edessa and in John of Ephesus but was misunderstood by their translators; see S. Frankel, *ZDMG* 53 (1899), 534, where he argues that in both these authors, Brooks and Cureton read the word as *dayrāyē* ("monks"), while it is in fact the Greek διάρια.

1. The Arabs whose Monophysite bishop was exiled were naturally Monophysites, and the Ghassānids immediately come to mind as the most natural candidates for the identification of this Arab federate group with them.¹¹ Surely the Ghassānids had a bishop, and since this is the only bishop of the federate Arabs mentioned in the list, the natural presumption is that he was their bishop. Later in the century, the Ghassānids had a bishop by the same name, the one who came after Theodore. But more important is the fact that this particular place, Ḥuwwārīn, is associated with the Ghassānids in a most relevant context. Around 580 the Ghassānid king Munḍir, before he was entrapped and captured, was invited to come to Ḥuwwārīn for the dedication of a church there. The invitation extended to Munḍir by the authorities naturally implies that the Ghassānid king had some special interest in Ḥuwwārīn, if the invitation extended to him was to seem appropriate and not sound suspicious. So it is possible that the attractiveness of Ḥuwwārīn for Munḍir derived from the fact that Evaria may have been or become the see of the Ghassānid bishop and Munḍir was invited to attend the dedication of a church in a town that especially interested him.¹²

2. Of the many *Notitiae Episcopatum*, that for Antioch, the *Notitia Antiochena*, is relevant to this discussion.¹³ That document, composed about 570, lists eleven bishoprics of Phoenicia Libanensis under the metropolitan of Damascus, among which it lists the "bishopric of Evaria" and the "bishopric of the Saracens."¹⁴ Honigmann has argued cogently that the bishopric of Evaria has to be distinguished from that of the bishopric of the Saracens, although his views on Ziza which come in the short account of the exiled bishop, John, have been rejected. The list of bishoprics for Phoenicia Libanensis thus reveals that the Arab federates had two bishoprics there: the one explicitly described as such, and that of Evaria, which, it has been argued, was most probably the Ghassānid. The Arabs that were described in the list as "Saracens" for the other bishopric must have been another group of federates, and it has been suggested¹⁵ that they most probably were the Salīhids of the fifth century, whose bishop Eustathius participated in the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

3. That the bishopric of the Ghassānids had its see in Evaria/Ḥuwwārīn in Phoenicia Libanensis rather than in Arabia may seem surprising. The headquarters of the Ghassānids was the Provincia Arabia, but they were already in this period in Palaestina Secunda, since Jabala was found at Jābiya by Simeon

¹¹ Much more than the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids of the two previous centuries, who presumably were Chalcedonians, and who were hardly visible in the 6th century, having been overshadowed by the Monophysite Ghassānids.

¹² On all this, see *BASIC* I.1, 456–61.

¹³ See E. Honigmann, "Studien zur Notitia Antiochena," *BZ* 25 (1925), 60–88.

¹⁴ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 98–100.

¹⁵ See *BAFIC*, 219–22, on Eustathius.

of Bēth-Arshām around 520, and so it is possible that their phylarchal and federate presence also extended to the neighboring province, Phoenicia Libanensis, even before their power was extended around 530 over the whole limitrophe up to the Euphrates. Little has survived in the sources on their exact whereabouts in this period, and so a Ghassānid bishopric in Evaria, in neighboring Phoenicia Libanensis, should not be cause for surprise. Their power might very well have extended to this province in which apparently there was room for more than one phylarchal presence. Perhaps this Evaria was where the Ghassānid bishop moved¹⁶ in 518/19, when the course of events for the Monophysites received so much acceleration and confusion with the advent of the Chalcedonian house of Justin. The town must have had a special attraction for the Ghassānid Arabs since it remained associated with them around 580 when Mundir was invited to attend a dedication ceremony there, and in early Islamic times it was associated with the Arab dynasty of the Umayyads who occupied many of the Ghassānid sites of the pre-Islamic period.¹⁷

4. The Ghassānids certainly had a bishop of their own, and this is consonant with the history of Arab federate groups such as those of Mavia in the fourth century and of Amorkesos of the fifth. If John turns out to be their bishop, which is more than likely, then the list of exiled bishops would provide the student of Ghassānid history with his name, John.

Another question arises concerning this bishop: was he ethnically an Arab? Again in conformity with past federate history, chances are that he was not only a bishop for the Arabs but also an Arab himself. His Arabness would be proven if he turned out to be the addressee of the letter written by Philoxenus, since the letter is addressed to "John, the Arab."¹⁸ Another question arises as to the name of the bishop—John. The Ghassānids and the Arab federates were aware of their Arabness and had a strong sense of Arab identity, reflected *inter alia* in their assumption of strictly Arab names. But John was not a soldier; he was an ecclesiastic who naturally assumed on his consecration the biblical and Christian name John.¹⁹

The short notice on John in the list of exiled bishops is also informative on his last days. According to the list, he died in Ḥarlān,²⁰ in the same

¹⁶ As reflected in the novel on Phoenicia with its references to phylarchs in the plural; see *BASIC* I.1, 198–99.

¹⁷ It was one of the favorite resorts of the Umayyad caliph Yazid; see Ḥuwwārīn, *El*², III, 645.

¹⁸ See above, 702–6.

¹⁹ Cf. what was said of one of Mundir's entourage around 580, who assumed the name Sergius, in *BASIC* I.1, 539–40.

²⁰ Ḥarlān was an episcopal see; cf. Honigmann, *Évêques*, 98–100. For its localization in Phoenicia Libanensis, see the discussion in Dussaud, *Topographie*, 302–3, which states that it was one of the haunts of the Umayyads in Islamic times; so Ḥarlān becomes another locality in

province in which his episcopal see was located, in the region of Damascus. Apparently he moved from Evaria to Ḥarlān, stripped of his bishopric,²¹ and evidently he died during the reign of Justin before Justinian, early in his reign, allowed the exiles to return.

Although in the sixth century the Ghassānids were the protectors and promoters of Monophysitism in Oriens, little is known about the history of their *ecclesia* and its organization. Around 540, when Theodore was appointed their bishop, more becomes known about them. But in this early period, the sources are silent, hence this reference to John, as bishop of the Arabs in Evaria, is of considerable importance. Although it is not absolutely certain that he was the bishop of the Ghassānids, there is a high degree of probability that he was. If so, the assignment of the Ghassānid bishop to a town such as Evaria is a matter of some importance in the journey of the Ghassānids as an integrated group in the Byzantine system, which contrasts with the status of previous *foederati*.

In the conciliar lists of Chalcedon and in the Letter of Leo, Eustathius the Arab bishop is not assigned to any particular see,²² but the Ghassānid bishop John is assigned to Evaria. This argues that there was a development in Arab ecclesiastical organization. Evaria was one of the eleven episcopal sees under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Damascus in Phoenicia Libanensis. It is known to have had a bishop named Thomas who was a contemporary of Eustathius and signed both the Chalcedonian definition and the Letter of Leo.²³ After 458 there is no mention of Evaria in the ecclesiastical history of the Orient as the see of a bishop until 519 when it is assigned or is described as the see of the Arab bishop John. As it is impossible to have two bishops in the same city, especially a small place like Evaria, and as no one else is mentioned as the bishop of Evaria in the sixth century, it is reasonable to conclude that Evaria became the episcopal see of the Arab Ghassānid bishop in the Orient. This represents an advance in the ecclesiastical history of the Arab *foederati* in the Orient: while in the fifth century the bishop of Salīḥ, Eustathius, had no fixed see assigned to him, the Ghassānid bishop in the sixth century had Evaria assigned to him during the reign of Anastasius, until at least 519. An echo of a Ghassānid connection with Evaria may be detected in the meeting between Muḏīr, the Ghassānid king, and Magnus late in the

which to seek the Ghassānid-Umayyad relationship. For this theme, see the present writer in "Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures: A Case of *Byzance après Byzance*," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, Institut Français de Damas (Damascus, 1992), 299–307.

²¹ Honigsmann (*Évêques*, 99–100) thinks that he either took refuge at Ḥarlān or was detained there by its bishop, who was a Chalcedonian, but this is pure guesswork.

²² See *BAFIC*, 219–22.

²³ For Thomas, see Devreesse, *PA*, 205; A. Musil, *Palmyrena* (New York, 1928), 37 note 8.

reign of Tiberius, as has already been noted. The Ghassānid bishop at Evaria presumably had under his jurisdiction all the other Ghassānid ecclesiastics—priests and deacons who ministered to the Ghassānids in Oriens.

The association of the Ghassānids ecclesiastically with a town such as Evaria is of some relevance to the question of whether or not towns in Oriens were assigned to them, a question that will be raised again in relation to bishop Theodore around 540, and also to their relation as *foederati* to Bostra itself, the capital of the Provincia Arabia.

The Lakhmids: Muḍīr and Christianity

If Jabala and his Ghassānids were not in evidence within Oriens, Muḍīr and his Lakhmids were. The latter's raids ranged far and wide along the Oriental *limes*, but what is relevant for ecclesiastical history is an examination of his raids on the Christian establishment in Oriens, especially his notorious abduction of four hundred nuns or virgins from the congregation of the church of the Apostle Thomas,²⁴ his massacring them and offering them as a sacrifice to the pagan goddess al-ʿUzzā ("the most powerful"), the Arabian Aphrodite, in 527. He was to repeat this barbarity later in his career when he captured the son of his Ghassānid adversary, Arethas, in the 540s and sacrificed him to the same goddess.²⁵ These barbarities have attracted the attention of anthropologists and historians of religion who were especially interested in them as evidence for the survival of human sacrifice among the pre-Islamic Arabs.²⁶ But Muḍīr's anti-Christian outbursts are even more important to the student of Arab-Byzantine relations, both secular and ecclesiastical, and the two are interrelated. An examination of what was involved in these barbarities conduces to a better understanding of Byzantine-Lakhmid relations. This has been lightly touched upon in Chapter I on the reign of Anastasius,²⁷ but it deserves a full treatment since it elucidates some important aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reign of Justin.

Muḍīr's barbarity and anti-Christian outbursts admit of various interpretations, the complexity of which may be stated as follows.

1. Personal. Muḍīr was the son of that Nu'mān who celebrated his reign over Ḥīra by many blasphemies and violations of Christian shrines. So he was born into a family that had been known for its hostility to Christianity; the death of his father has been attributed, at least in pious thought,

²⁴ Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 53, lines 11–17.

²⁵ See *BASIC* I.1, 238.

²⁶ For instance, J. Henninger, "Menschenopfer bei den Arabern," *Anthropos* (1958), 734–38. The older works of leading Orientalists on Arabian paganism are still valuable, such as J. Wellhausen, *Reste Arabischen Heidentums* (repr. Berlin-Leipzig, 1927), and Nöldeke's penetrating article on the religions of the ancient Arabs in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed J. Hastings (New York, 1928), 1, 659–73, especially pp. 665, 669.

²⁷ See above, 708–9.

to a heated altercation he had with a Christian chief in his army, which made his wound swell and as a result of which he died.²⁸ Muḍīr remembered all this and imbibed hostility toward Christianity from his father.

2. Dynastic. With the exception of Imru' al-Qays and Nu'mān, the Lakhmid kings of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively, the dynasty was solidly pagan. Paganism among the Lakhmids was somewhat institutionalized, and the reign of Muḍīr became even more so with the various idols in Ḥīra that were associated with the dynasty, such as the two idols called al-Ghariyyān.²⁹ Furthermore, as the ruler of Ḥīra, he had under him an army of Arabs from northeastern Arabia, which in spite of some Christian and Jewish elements in it, must have been fairly pagan. The Lakhmids must have decided that they looked stronger as leaders of a pagan army if they shared its paganism than led it as Christian converts.

3. Muḍīr's style in warfare was that of a Ghāzī, a raider of the frontier or the *limes*, which offered him spacious opportunities for looting. Christian places of worship, with their treasures, had great drawing power for the rapacious bird of prey that the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra undoubtedly was. Conversion to Christianity would have terminated his career as raider of the Christian churches and monasteries.

Perhaps even more important than all these personal and dynastic considerations were ones that pertain to Persia, both its ruling dynasty, the Sasanids, and to its religious class, the Magi.

1. The Magi were the guardians of the official religion of the Persian state, namely, Zoroastrianism. This was an exclusive, non-proselytizing religion that looked askance at, and was intolerant of, the claims of Christianity in Persia since the latter was a religion with universalistic claims and a mission to convert the *oikoumenē* to its doctrines. Hence the strong opposition of the Magi to Christianity, and their prestige and power in Persian society were great, especially with the Sasanid king.

2. The Sasanids. The Persian kings may or may not have been religious rulers, but Christianity in the fourth century became an especially unacceptable faith to be spread in Persia, because after the conversion of Constantine it became the religion of the secular enemy that had imperialistic claims in the East and was now supported by a religion that, too, had universalistic claims, and whose cross had become the Byzantine military emblem. Hence all Christians in Persia became suspect as a fifth column whose sympathies were with the enemy, Byzantium.³⁰ Muḍīr's paganism was acceptable to Ctesiphon but not his Christianity.

²⁸ On Nu'mān see BASIC I.1, 17–18.

²⁹ See Rothstein, *DLH*, 140–41. On the possibility that Muḥarriq was also a Lakhmid pagan god, see *ibid.*, 142.

³⁰ See A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), 267–68.

3. The Sasanids were particularly opposed to the conversion of the Lakhmid dynasts and the takeover of Ḥīra by Christianity. Ḥīra was within striking distance of Ctesiphon, and the Arabs of Ḥīra could and did play a decisive role in determining the course of events in Sasanid history.³¹ A Christian king in Ḥīra was intolerable.

The Lakhmid principality happened to be located geographically in a sensitive area, vital for the safety of the empire. It was Persia's western flank in its struggle with Byzantium. A Christian king in Ḥīra would be amenable to Byzantine influence after Christianity had become Byzantium's state religion.³² The conversion of the Lakhmid ruler of Ḥīra to Christianity would have given this "dangerous" religion in Persia the one thing it lacked—official protection and patronage.³³

Mundir must have been aware of this Sasanid attitude toward Christianity and the manner in which the Sasanid overlord would have viewed his conversion to that religion.³⁴

4. Mundir's barbarities toward the four hundred nuns/virgins took place during the reign of Kawad in the 520s. So the understanding of the meaning of this barbarity—if it had any meaning to it—will have to be related to his relations with Kawad and the events of that decade. Mundir's barbarity is likely to have been designed as an expression of loyalty toward Kawad.

It will be remembered that Mundir, in the second decade of this century or during the reign of Anastasius, had dabbled with Christianity. Furthermore, he married a Christian Kindite princess, daughter of the Kindite king,

³¹ In the 5th century, the succession of Vahram to the throne was secured by the troops of a Lakhmid king, another Mundir I; see Rothstein, *DLH*, 68–69; Christensen, *L'Iran*, 274–75. Nu'mān III stood by Chosroes against Vahram, late in the 6th century; Rothstein, *DLH*, 112.

³² An instructive parallel is Persia's sensitivity to Christianity in Armenia and Arzanene and the quick measures Yazdgard II took to solve the problem in a way satisfactory to Persian political and military interests; see Christensen, *L'Iran*, 284–89. Persian sensitivity to any changes in their western provinces which might have political and military implications is understandable. While the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was far from the Roman-Persian frontier, the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, was within striking distance of that frontier. The Persians could threaten Byzantium's eastern provinces, but the Byzantines could threaten the Persian capital itself. In addition, the province in which one of the three fire-temples, Adhur-Gushnasp, was located was also a western province, Atropatene, which, too, was within striking distance of the Byzantine forces stationed at the frontier. In negotiating or fighting with the Persians, the Byzantines probably did not recognize that Persian sensitivity to its western frontier was genuine and justified.

³³ It was for the same reason that the Persian king was opposed to the conversion of the kings of the Caucasian region, which also would have meant amenability to Byzantine influence; cf. the episode of the Lazic king, Tzath, involving Justin I and the latter's correspondence with Kawad; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 412–14.

³⁴ The predicament of the Lakhmids in this respect was most explicitly stated by one of their 5th-century kings, Nu'mān; for what he confided to Antiochus, the *dux* of Phoenicia Libanensis, see *BAFIC*, 163 note 4.

Arethas. Finally, Severus, the patriarch in Byzantine Antioch, sent him a mission to convert him to Monophysitism.³⁵ All this must have made the Lakhmid king suspect in the eyes of a suspicious king of kings. As has been stated before, Munḍir's flirtation with Christianity did not last long, and he reappears in the 520s as the perfect pagan. Hence his barbarity may be partly construed not so much as anti-Christian as an attempt to prove to Kawad that he was cured of all Christian sympathies and was providing ample evidence for his recantation.

This barbarity may also be related to the events of the 520s when Kawad himself dabbled with Mazdakism, asked Munḍir to embrace it, and when the latter refused, expelled him from Ḥīra and installed Arethas the Kindite as its ruler for a few years, the years of Kinda's interregnum in Ḥīra.³⁶ Immediately after 527 Munḍir was restored. His barbarity may thus be related to his reconciliation with Kawad after the estrangement, and nothing could have better commended Munḍir to Sasanid official favor than a barbarity against the Christian religion, proof of his loyalty to his overlord.

5. In addition to being opposed to a takeover of Ḥīra by Christianity, for the reasons explored above, Kawad was particularly opposed to the conversion of Munḍir himself, who turned out to be his most valuable ally in the war with Byzantium. Anything that might affect the efficiency of Munḍir's military effort in the conflict with Byzantium would be unacceptable, and Christianity could do just that. The efficient prosecution of the war against the Byzantines depended, among other things, on a clearly defined system of opposition between the two states in which the opposition between Zoroastrianism and Christianity was a part. Anything that blurred the distinction and the edge of the religious opposition would tend to interfere with the military quality of the offensive against Byzantium. On two occasions, once during the reign of Munḍir and another during the reign of his father, Nu'mān, Christians in the army of the Lakhmids thwarted or tried to thwart the military designs of their king when their Christian sentiments were touched.³⁷ The Persian kings themselves could remember the part played by the Christian elements in their armies.³⁸

In addition to Munḍir's relation to his Sasanid overlord, there were factors that were not related to Persia but operated with Munḍir in connection with his anti-Christian outbursts. Munḍir was a contemporary and possibly

³⁵ On this see above, 706–9.

³⁶ See *BASIC* I.1, 39, 41.

³⁷ In 502 before Nu'mān's attack on Edessa and later when the letter of the South Arabian king arrived during the conference of Ramla.

³⁸ On the experiences of Yazdgard with the Christian element in his army during the campaign against the Tchōls, see Christensen, *L'Iran*, 289.

also a witness of the persecutions of the Christians of South Arabia, especially those of the city of Najrān, the great Christian center there. Even during the conference of Ramla, a letter reached him from the dynast of South Arabia, the Ḥimyarite king Yūsuf, informing him of the massacre of Christians in his realm and asking him to do likewise.³⁹ Muṇḍir was shrewd enough not to comply, but the events in South Arabia are relevant for recreating the atmosphere of anti-Christian sentiments in Arabia at the time in which Muṇḍir lived. Whether the massacre of the four hundred nuns/virgins was related to those in South Arabia is not entirely clear.

The inveterate enmity that existed between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids is well known, especially between Muṇḍir and his contemporary, the Ghassānid Arethas. The former was a rabid pagan; the latter a fervent Christian. The barbarity of Muṇḍir could derive partly from this, especially his sacrifice of the son of Arethas to al-ʿUzzā.⁴⁰ In so doing, Muṇḍir carried his enmity toward Arethas to the religious sphere. By sacrificing his adversary's son to the pagan goddess, Muṇḍir could hurt Arethas' religious sensibilities and, what is more, could demonstrate that his own pagan god had triumphed over the God of his Christian adversary.

II. OUTSIDE THE *LIMES*

The disestablishment of Monophysitism within the Byzantine Empire and the subsequent persecutions of its clerics forced the movement to seek refuge outside imperial limits. In so doing it scored new victories that offset its losses within Oriens. Its victories were spectacular in the area of the Red Sea which, during this reign and that of Justinian,⁴¹ became a Monophysite lake. So paradoxically, it was Justin's ecclesiastical policy that led to this extraordinary Monophysite expansion in this Afro-Asian region.

The Arab areas affected by this Monophysite mission outside the *limes* were mainly three: (1) Ḥijāz in western Arabia; (2) Ḥīra of the Lakhmids, on the middle Euphrates; (3) and South Arabia. The first, to which, it has been argued, the Ghassānids most probably withdrew, has been analyzed in Chapter II.⁴² Their presence in Ḥijāz must have conducted to the spread of Monophysitism in that region during the reign of Justin. What needs a slightly more detailed treatment is the discussion of the other two areas that were affected: Lakhmid Ḥīra and South Arabia.

³⁹ On these events in South Arabia, see *Martyrs*, passim; on Yūsuf's letters to Muṇḍir, see *ibid.*, 114–22, 128–31.

⁴⁰ Procopius, *History*, II.xxviii.13.

⁴¹ When Nubia was Christianized by the Monophysite missionary Julian, thus uniting Egypt and Ethiopia, already won to the Monophysite cause; see Frend, *Rise*, 287–303.

⁴² See *BASIC* I.1, 38–39.

Hīra and Ramla

If the position of the Monophysites was untenable in Byzantium, it was equally so in Sasanid Persia where, since the Council of Seleucia in 488, Nestorianism had been established as the acceptable form of Christianity. The Nestorians and the Monophysites were inveterate enemies. Yet at the conference of Ramla, ca. 520, the Monophysites were represented. Technically that conference was held for negotiating the return of two Roman soldiers that Muṇḍir had captured in one of his raids against Oriens. The Byzantine ambassador was Abraham, a veteran diplomat whose family had served Byzantium before in the reign of Anastasius. Among other things, the conference was remarkable for the number of ecclesiastics that took part in it.⁴³ What is relevant here is to follow the fortunes of Monophysitism at this conference.

Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, the celebrated Monophysite bishop, obviously represented the Monophysites in Persia at the conference. From his letter comes the intelligence that Abraham himself, the ambassador of Justin to Muṇḍir, was either a Monophysite at heart or a crypto-Monophysite.⁴⁴ The ambassador whom the last Christian king of South Arabia had sent to Muṇḍir, before his reign was terminated by Yūsuf of South Arabia, must also have been a Monophysite since that was the doctrinal persuasion of that country. What is most remarkable is that one of the courtiers or friends of Muṇḍir himself was a Monophysite by the name of Ḥajjāj, the Angaios of the *Martyrium Arethae*.⁴⁵

The *Chronicle of Sa'ard* states that in the theological dispute between Shilas, the Nestorian Catholicus, and the Monophysites who had fled from Byzantium, Ḥajjāj helped the Monophysites.⁴⁶ The implication of the description of Ḥajjāj is that Monophysitism still maintained some presence even at the Lakhmid court in Hīra. This ties in well with the efforts of Philoxenus and Severus, the two Monophysite ecclesiastics during the reign of Anastasius, to win over the rulers of Hīra to Monophysitism.⁴⁷

⁴³ This conference has been treated in great detail by the present writer in "Byzantino-arabica: The Conference of Ramla, A.D. 524" *JNES* 33 (1964), 115-31 (hereafter "Ramla"). For the resetting of its chronology, see the section on the conference, *BASIC* I.1, 40-42. Ramla, according to the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, was at a distance of ten days journey south-east of Hīra; see "Ramla," 121 note 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 119 note 23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 117-18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 117, where it was said that he was either a Monophysite or a Dyophysite; after a reexamination of the text of the *Chronicle*, I am now inclined to think he was definitely a Monophysite.

⁴⁷ The presence of a Monophysite at the court of Muṇḍir could also explain why the Christian king of South Arabia had sent an ambassador to Muṇḍir, possibly concerning the condition of the Monophysites in Hīra. Ḥajjāj may have been known in South Arabia, and would have helped their cause with Muṇḍir.

That the Monophysites were not altogether unwelcome in Ḥīra could derive support from another statement in the *Chronicle of Sa'ard*, that the Monophysites of Byzantium expelled by Justin found their way to Ḥīra where, however, they did not tarry long.⁴⁸ That a Christian group, expelled from Byzantium, could make its way to a city whose ruler was known for his anti-Christian outbursts seems surprising, but not when it is recalled that the Monophysites maintained some presence in Persia, to the point of having a friend at the court of Mundir himself.⁴⁹

More important than the Monophysite presence in Ḥīra is what the *Chronicle* says on the specific theological cast of these Monophysites who flocked to Ḥīra after being expelled by Justin, namely, that they were followers of Julian the Phantasiast.⁵⁰ The *Chronicle* indicates that after their short stay in Ḥīra where they were not accepted, they proceeded to Najrān where they sowed the seeds of Julianism, a matter of some importance to understanding the history of Christianity in South Arabia and of the various Christian confessions that prevailed in that region.

South Arabia

While the Monophysites were being persecuted within the empire in the reign of Justin, they were also persecuted in South Arabia and, what is more, literally massacred, as the result of a change in the religious orientation of the Ḥimyarite kingdom of South Arabia. Simeon of Bēth-Arshām heard the news accidentally while he was at the conference of Ramla, and he spread the word in the Christian Orient and tried to organize a crusade against South Arabia for the relief of its Christians. This extraordinary course of events led to a joint Ethiopian-Byzantine expedition, and the outcome was a complete victory that returned South Arabia to the Christian fold.⁵¹ The following observations may be made on the victory scored by Monophysitism in South Arabia.⁵²

⁴⁸ See *Histoire Nestorienne*, 143–44.

⁴⁹ In a primary Syriac source, Simeon speaks of his having baptized Af'ū, one of the Ḥimyarites, in the Church of the Monophysites in Ḥīra; *The Book of the Ḥimyarites*, ed. and trans. A. Moberg (Lund, 1924), p. cxv. So there was a Monophysite church in Ḥīra ca. 520, to which may be related Severus' letter mentioned in a previous chapter, above, 706–9.

⁵⁰ *Histoire Nestorienne*, 144.

⁵¹ Because of their location and their belonging to the world of the southern Semites, these events that took place in South Arabia tend to be forgotten as relevant to Monophysitism in general and to Byzantine Oriens in particular. It is a pity that *The Martyrs of Najrān*, which drew attention to these events and placed them in the mainstream of Near Eastern history and that of Oriens Christianus, was not available to Frend when he wrote *Rise*, which appeared almost simultaneously in 1972. Omission of reference to these events was noted by Father Michel van Esbroeck in his review of this work; see *AB* 91 (1973), 443. It should be noted that Zacharia, the primary Syriac source for the reign of Justin, is aware of the place of South Arabia in the history of Monophysitism, since he devotes a very long chapter to it—the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām; see Zacharia, *HE*, Book VIII, chap. 3, versio, pp. 43–52.

⁵² The present writer has examined these events in detail in three works: *Martyrs*,

A

1. Although Justin was a zealous Chalcedonian, he could not but respond positively to the appeal for help and participation in the South Arabian crusade. A Byzantine fleet transported the Ethiopian expeditionary force, led by Negus Caleb (Ella-Aşbeha), to South Arabia.⁵³

2. South Arabia emerged as a new Monophysite power in the Red Sea area. This was a great gain for the persecuted church within Byzantium since it could now count South Arabia in addition to Ethiopia as states whose confession was Monophysitism.

3. As a Christian state, South Arabia endured for about fifty years until the Persian occupation. So for half a century that country remained a bastion of Monophysitism and a sphere of influence for Chalcedonian Byzantium in the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea area. The expedition clinched the Ethiopian-Byzantine friendly relationship which had started with the conversion of Ethiopia to Christianity. Now the two powers, Chalcedonian Byzantium and Monophysite Ethiopia, engaged in a joint crusade, and this put the seal on their alliance which continued for a long time to come.

4. Ecclesiastically, South Arabia witnessed a resurgence of the faith, with churches built or rebuilt, a new and developed hierarchy, and an episcopate.⁵⁴ It even became a distinguished Monophysite region, the country of Monophysite martyrs who died for their faith, a special category of martyrs, since their martyrdom took place after the Peace of the Church. The Monophysite church persecuted by the Dyophysites was now a church of Christian martyrs whom even Dyophysite Byzantium venerated.

5. Finally, and as far as the Arabs are concerned, the victory of Monophysitism and the Ethiopian army in South Arabia tipped the scales in the struggle for Arabia between Judaism and Christianity in favor of the latter.⁵⁵

"Ramla," and "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 233–94. The reader is referred to these works for detailed discussion of the events. The observations in this volume are, therefore, deliberately brief and are presented in order to complete the picture in this chapter devoted to the ecclesiastical history of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin I. More will be said on these events in *BASIC II*.

⁵³ See "Ramla," 128–30.

⁵⁴ See "Byzantium in South Arabia," 35–53, 59–60.

⁵⁵ The abundance of anti-Semitic sentiments in Byzantine literature in the 6th and 7th centuries may in part be referred to these events in which Christians were massacred by the Judaizing king of Himyar; to these may be added the course of the Persian-Byzantine conflict which flared up in the reign of every emperor of the 6th century and the early 7th, after a lull throughout the 5th century. In these wars the Jews sided with the Persians. Finally, the occupation of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614 may be added in view of the massacre, real or fictitious, that was trumpeted by Strategius, the monk of St. Sabas, who recorded the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians. For the latest on Byzantine anti-Semitism, see G. Dagron and V. Deroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VII^e siècle," *TM* 11 (1991), 17–273, and the valuable introduction; also V. Deroche, "La polémique anti-judaïque au VI^e et au VII^e siècle: Un memento inédit, les Kephalaia," *ibid.*, 275–311.

For a century before the rise of Islam, Christianity, not Judaism, became the dominant monotheistic faith in Arabia. Christian South Arabia became the center of radiation for the Christian faith among the Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia. The chief *martyrion* in Najrān, the Ka'ba of Najrān, became a great pilgrimage center for the Christians of the Arabian Peninsula for a century, until the emigration of the Najrānites to the Fertile Crescent during the caliphate of Omar.⁵⁶

B

The aforementioned gains that resulted from the smashing Monophysite victory in South Arabia were substantial. But most relevant here is the relation of that victory to the fortunes of the Arabs within the empire, especially the Ghassānids, the *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century. Although they did not participate in the South Arabian crusade,⁵⁷ the martyrdoms in that region affected them deeply throughout their long relationship with Byzantium.

1. Although the martyrdoms affected many localities in South Arabia, it was Najrān, the Arab city in the predominantly Sabaean/Ḥimyarite south, that bore the brunt of the conflict. Najrān had already become the center of Christianity in South Arabia long before the martyrdoms, and that was confirmed during the reign of Anastasius through the inception of its episcopate, whose first incumbent was consecrated by Philoxenus of Hierapolis. Najrān's privileged place is reflected in the fact that the saint whose feast the universal church celebrates on 24 October was not a Ḥimyarite but an Arab from Najrān, in fact its *sayyid*, St. Arethas, al-Ḥārith ibn-Ka'b, and so was the woman martyr Ruhayma, who is also venerated together with Arethas and the Najrānites.⁵⁸

2. The Ghassānids were Arabs as the Najrānites were; moreover, they were related to the Najrānites in the larger context of descent from South Arab ancestry, since they had hailed from South Arabia before they finally settled within the *limes* and became *foederati* of Byzantium. A previous chapter has even indicated that the Ghassānids were probably involved in winning over the Najrānites to the Monophysite confession. Finally, the Ghassānids were related to the Najrānites not only in the larger context of South Arab

⁵⁶ See "Byzantium in South Arabia," 69–80.

⁵⁷ Byzantium naturally thought of the Blemmyes and the Nobadae who were closer to the South Arabian scene than the Ghassānids; "Ramla," 130; besides, these had withdrawn from the service of Byzantium and were most probably then settled in northern Ḥijāz.

⁵⁸ The feast of St. Arethas in the Roman martyrology is 24 October; see *DHGE*, III, s.v. Arethas, 1 (col. 1650). On Arethas and Ruhayma, see *Martyrs*; these saints may be added to the short list of Arab saints which includes Cosmas and Damian, and also Moses of the 4th century. Ruhayma of Najrān emerges as the first woman Arab saint.

descent, but in the narrower context of belonging to the Azd group.³⁹ Hence these martyrs in South Arabia were not only fellow Arabs in a general sense but also their immediate relatives, their cousins.

3. The Ghassānids, an Arab military aristocracy that had hewn its way through the Arabian Peninsula, settled within the Roman *limes*, on Roman territory, and were christianized. For more than a century they became the zealous champions of the Monophysite church and even endured misfortunes and also betrayals on the part of the central government because of their faith. The phenomenon needs an explanation. The old Arab concepts of *wafā'* and *walā'* only partly explain their staunch support. The full explanation becomes available when the martyrdoms of their cousins in Najrān are recalled. The Ghassānids are no longer only a military aristocracy attached to the Christian faith. They are now utterly committed to Christianity and its Monophysite variation because they are now related to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the faith, whose *sayyid*, al-Ḥārith ibn-Ka'b, appears in the Christian calendar as St. Arethas, and whose *martyrion* in Najrān had become a great pilgrimage center. This is the key to understanding the strong Christian commitment of the Ghassānids throughout this century of christological controversies and to explaining their dedication to the Monophysite cause throughout the sixth century. Although their conversion to Monophysitism during the reign of Anastasius had laid the foundation for their attachment to the Monophysite cause, it was the martyrdoms of their relatives in Najrān during the reign of Justin that raised it to a much higher power and that sustained them throughout the sixth century after the house of Justin returned Byzantium to the Chalcedonian fold.

C

In the course of these convulsions that characterized the reign of Justin, two figures dominate the scene of the Monophysite struggle for existence: Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, the dedicated Monophysite bishop who stirred Oriens Christianus and Byzantium for the South Arabian crusade, and Jabala, the king and phylarch of the Ghassānid *foederati*. The role of the first is clearer

³⁹ The Arabs of Najrān belonged in their tribal affiliation to Banū al-Ḥārith ibn-Ka'b (Balḥārith). See *BAFIC*, 400–401, where it was argued that these were Azdites as the Ghassānids were. In addition to the testimony of Ibn Sa'īd, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Mas'ūdī for the Azdite affiliation of Balḥārith (*BAFIC*, 400 note 4), there is the contemporary and decisive testimony of Ḥassān ibn-Thābit, the poet of the Ghassānids. He was an Azdite from Medina, and consequently related to the Azdite Ghassānids. In one of his poems he addresses a clan of Balḥārith and refers to the fact that it has the same tribal affiliation as his; see *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn-Thābit*, ed. W. 'Arafāt, Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1971), I, 355.

The Sabaic inscription referred to in *BAFIC*, 400, presents a problem that will be discussed in *BASIC* II. But the Azdite affiliation of Balḥārith is established without it.

than that of the second, but both were related to Byzantium: the first through his journey to the Golān heights to invoke the aid of Jabala and through his exhortation of clerics within Byzantium to use their influence with Justin for helping their brethren in South Arabia; the second by showing his loyalty to Monophysitism and withdrawing from the service of Byzantium. While in northern Ḥijāz, Jabala also contributed indirectly to the success of the South Arabian crusade by watching over Jewish settlements there, thus preventing them from extending assistance to the Judaizing Ḥimyarite ruler of South Arabia.

III. APPENDIX

The Four Hundred Virgins

The account of the four hundred nuns or virgins abducted by Mundir, discussed above in the section "Mundir and Christianity," presents some textual problems.

A

It is not quite clear whether these women were nuns or maidens, and arguments may be given supporting either reading.¹ In support of their being virgins, it may be said that the most common term for nuns is *dayrātā*, but the author, Zacharia, uses *batulāthā*,² which literally means "virgins" but can also mean "nuns." On the other hand, a case can be made for their being nuns: (1) if Zacharia had in mind only maidens and not cloistered maidens he might have used the word *laimtā* which can mean only maidens, and indeed John of Ephesus uses this term in connection with an episode not unlike this one.³ Furthermore, the large number, four hundred, could argue in the same direction. It suggests that the place of worship from which Mundir captured them is likely to have been a convent rather than a church, since if it was the latter it must have been an exceptionally large one to have contained worshipers of all ages and both sexes from which Mundir singled out four hundred maidens for his barbarity. And it would have been perfectly consonant with this barbarity to have chosen for his sacrifice to al-ʿUzzā not merely maidens but the nuns of a convent.

The number four hundred sounds suspiciously large. Perhaps, as has been suggested, it was only forty.⁴ But Zacharia goes out of his way to give his authority for this figure, the anchorite Dada, who had seen the massacre with his own eyes.

B

In the Latin version of Zacharia, the four hundred maidens were captured "de coetu Thomae apostoli Emesae."⁵ The translation of the Syriac term *d'ams* which

¹ Vasiliev, for example, (*Justin*, 277) considered them "maidens."

² Zacharia, *HE*, textus, p. 78, line 1.

³ John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO, Scriptorum Syri, ser. 3, vol. 3 textus, p. 293, line 19.

⁴ J. Henninger, "Menschenopfer bei den Arabern," *Anthropos* (1958), 734-38.

⁵ Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 53, line 14.

comes after "the apostle Thomas" presents a problem.⁶ Brooks and Chabot both translated it "Emesa," the name of the well-known city in Phoenicia. But Emesa in Syriac is normally spelled quite differently (Ḥims), and the author had used this orthography in referring to Emesa in the same passage that speaks of the four hundred virgins.

Michael the Syrian has *dimyūs*⁷ instead of the *d'ams* of Zacharia, and it is of course Greek δῆμιος, *carnifex publicus*, the executioner. This makes sense, and the sentence would thus be translated: "and the four hundred virgins/nuns who were captured from the congregation of Thomas the Apostle, the public executioner sacrificed in one day in honor of al-'Uzzā." *Dēmios* (δῆμιος) would be a suitable term which expresses the disgust of the ecclesiastical historian for the butchering of four hundred nuns or virgins.⁸

In spite of the case that can be made for *dēmios* as the correct reading, an alternative emendation is possible, called for by the realization that the name of a city or locality is expected after the phrase "the congregation of the apostle Thomas" in order to specify where the abduction took place, although the church may have been so well known to the local or regional historian and to his readers that no such specification was necessary. There is an Emisa mentioned in the lists of convents in Syria and commented upon by Littmann and Honigmann, and it may be what Zacharia had in mind.⁹ A monastery is mentioned in connection with this locality, and geographically it is located between Antioch and Chalcis, the area into which Mundir had carried his invasion.

⁶ Ibid., textus, p. 78, line 2.

⁷ See *Chronique*, II, p. 271, middle column, line 16.

⁸ On its possible application to another figure associated with anti-Christian outbursts and a contemporary of Mundir's, namely, Yūsuf, the Ḥimyarite king of South Arabia, see *Martyrs*, 265.

⁹ See E. Honigmann, "Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 1 (Leipzig, 1922), 23 note 25; E. Littmann, "Zur Topographie der Antiochene and Apamene," *ibid.*, 174.

XI

The Reign of Justinian (527–565)

INTRODUCTION

The reign of Justinian was the longest in the sixth century and witnessed momentous developments in the history of the Monophysite movement and of the Ghassānid involvement in it. Before embarking on a discussion of this complex involvement, some attention should be paid to the attitudes of the new emperor toward the movement.¹

The reign may be divided into three phases with regard to imperial relations with Monophysitism. (1) In the first phase, 527–536, the controversy raged round the Theopaschite formula: "One of the Holy Trinity has suffered in the flesh." (2) In the second phase, 536–553, the controversy centered round the "Three Chapters." (3) In the third phase, 553–565, Justinian tried to enforce the decisions of the Council of Constantinople. The emperor was a serious "theologian," a strict Chalcedonian who was genuinely interested in solving the Monophysite problem in the East. His theological convictions as a Chalcedonian and his imperial designs allied him more with the West than the East: it was a Roman pope, Leo, not an Alexandrian nor an Antiochene patriarch, that had formulated the Chalcedonian doctrine; imperial designs meant the reconquest of the Roman Occident; and he himself came from the Balkans, from Dardania in Illyricum.² Yet, in spite of this, Justinian had a soft spot for Monophysitism and tried to solve the problem it presented throughout his long life. There were special considerations that influenced him to give this privileged treatment to Monophysitism. When he came to power, Justinian was in effective territorial control of the Roman Orient, not the Occident, and this was full of Monophysites. Further, one of the four patriarchates of the Orient, that of Alexandria, had as its incumbent a

¹ For Justinian and the Monophysites in general, see Frend, *Rise*, 255–95; also the short account of John Meyendorff in the more recent work with its relevant and challenging title, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division*, in the series *The Church in History* (New York, 1989), 221–30, 235–45.

² See the long argument on his origins and place of birth in Vasiliev, *Justin*, 43–49.

Monophysite, Timothy (517–535), and Egypt, an important province for Byzantium, was strongly Monophysite. Finally, his own consort, Theodora, was a Monophysite and intervened at nearly every turn to protect the interests and leaders of the movement.

A

The First Phase (527–536)

I. INTRODUCTION

For a clearer understanding of the Ghassānids' role in the Monophysite movement during this first period, it is best to divide it into two parts. The first³ extends from 527 to 532. It opens with an edict attacking the heretics and includes fulminations or anathemas against such figures as Eutyches and Apollinaris, but leaves out Severus and the Ghassānids. It also excludes the Arian Goths in the West who, unlike the Saracen allies, are mentioned expressly by name. The policy of reconciling the Monophysites reached its climax in 531 and in the following years. In 531 the emperor halted the persecution of the Monophysites and issued an edict allowing the Monophysite monks to return from exile. In 532 he convened a conference in Constantinople which, however, was unsuccessful in resolving theological differences.

The second period⁴ extends from 532 to 535/36, a time of truce with the Monophysites, during which the emperor, trying to unite the differing religious factions, issued two decrees on theological matters that came up at the conference. He emphasized his Theopaschite formula which represented the ultimate effort of compromise with the Monophysites. The climax of this period⁵ was reached in 535/36 when Monophysitism seemed to score a signal triumph. Severus, who had refused the invitation to attend the conference of 532, came to Constantinople either in the winter of 534/35 or in September 535, and was received by the emperor. But this great triumph was followed almost immediately by a resounding defeat for the movement.

With Theodora's help, Monophysites were installed in the patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria. With the death of Timothy of Alexandria, the see of St. Mark was finally filled, in 535, by Theodosius, who had been a deacon, and Severus' letters reassured him of his canonicity. With the death of Epiphanius in Constantinople, Anthimus was consecrated patriarch of that see, and the two newly elected patriarchs communicated with each other. This

³ Frend, *Rise*, 255–67.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 267–70.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 270–71.

was the result of a collaboration between the influential empress, Theodora, and the chief Monophysite figure, Severus, in the capital itself.

II. EARLY GHASSĀNID-IMPERIAL CONTACTS: JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA

The sources are silent on the ecclesiastical fortunes of the Ghassānids in this decade or so, unlike their political and military roles, which were well noticed in the sources. The accidents of survival must be the explanation for this silence, since a few years after the end of this decade (the first phase), Arethas, the Ghassānid supreme phylarch, arrived in Constantinople and scored an outstanding victory—the ordination of the two bishops, Jacob and Theodore, which changed the course of Monophysite history. Arethas continued to be a force in the movement until his death in 569. His appearance around 540 in Constantinople could not possibly have been without a background of involvement in the Monophysite movement in the preceding years, and the same must be said of his father who served Justinian for some two years before his death at the battle of Thannūris in 528. Thus it is important to examine this decade in order to understand the involvement of the Ghassānids in Monophysitism and their role in Justinian's scheme of things.

The first and last years of this phase, 527 and 536, witnessed two Justinianic decrees against the heretics. The first did not mention living Monophysite "heretics" such as Severus but anathematized Eutyches and others, while the second, in much stronger terms, fulminated against the Monophysites and singled them out, mentioning their leaders by name, especially Severus. How, then, did Arethas and the Ghassānid royal house thrive in this period and succeed in keeping their prestige and influence in Constantinople with the central government? And how did they, shortly after, engineer a *coup* in the capital that brought about the ordination of the two bishops, a crucial development in the history of Monophysitism? The answer to these questions must be sought in the attitude of the royal couple, Justinian and Theodora. Something has already been said on this subject in a previous chapter⁶ in the context of political and military history, but it deserves a full treatment here in this part on ecclesiastical history to which it properly belongs.

Justinian

There were many factors that were operative and that may explain Justinian's tolerance, even friendliness, toward the Ghassānids and Arethas. His apprenticeship to statecraft and preparation for his future role during the reign of his uncle Justin, when he was the *de facto* ruler of the empire, prepared him for accepting the Ghassānids. During the reign of Justin, two series of events took place that were relevant to this attitude. The Ḥimyarite-Ethiopian

⁶ See *BASIC* I.1, 68, 319–20.

war in South Arabia drew his attention to the importance of Monophysitism in the Red Sea area and the Arabian Peninsula, at least western Arabia, and the Ghassānids were part of that Afro-Arabian world. Byzantium had important relations with that region, and the emperor himself initiated an ambitious and imaginative Afro-Arabian policy which was reflected in the embassy of Julian around 530. The Ghassānids belonged to that world, and Justinian understood their relevance.

Closer to home than the events in South Arabia were the raids of Muḍir against Oriens,⁷ made possible by the withdrawal of the Ghassānids from the service. The exposed Roman *limes* could be protected effectively against the tactics of an enemy such as the Lakhmid Muḍir only by the Ghassānids. Justinian witnessed all these events while he waited to succeed to the throne. When he did become emperor, he did so already prepared to solve the Ghassānid problem since he could not afford to have the most efficient federate army in Oriens inactive. And it was not difficult for him to reject Monophysite theologians and accept Monophysite soldiers. The events in South Arabia provided precedents. Justin, the Chalcedonian, sent a fleet that transported the Ethiopian army of the Monophysite Negus, Ella-Aṣbeḥa⁸—a case of Monophysite-Dyophysite military cooperation and a precedent that could easily be repeated in his reign. The Arian Goths in the Roman Occident also provided him with a parallel to the situation in the Orient. Justinian had exempted them from his decree of 527, although he damned them as heretics. And so in this sense also the Ghassānids became the Germans of the East in this ecclesiastical context.

Justinian's decision to accommodate the Ghassānids as soon as he ascended the throne⁹ was strengthened by the outbreak of the Persian war after a long lull since the peace with Persia during the reign of Anastasius in 506. For one who had designs to recover the West, Justinian could ill afford a Persian war in the East without the participation of the powerful federate army of the Ghassānids. He had a personal acquaintance with the eastern front since, during his uncle's reign, he was *stratēgos*,¹⁰ and it is possible that he met Jabala or Arethas then or heard about them.

The emperor's decision to come to terms with the Ghassānids was fully justified by events. The Ghassānids acquitted themselves remarkably well in the first Persian war, and Justinian sent his ambassador Julian ca. 530 on his

⁷ Ibid., 79–82.

⁸ See *Martyrs*, 203–4, and "Conference of Ramla," 128–29.

⁹ Just as his strong anti-Monophysite reaction in 536 was apparently related in part to his designs on Italy and the capture of Rome, as suspected by Bury, *HLRE*, 378, and Frend, *Rise*, 272–75.

¹⁰ See Procopius, *History*, I.xii.21.

historic mission to the Afro-Arabian world. If Arethas came to Constantinople for the investiture after he was made *basileus*, Justinian would certainly have met him. Judging from a well-known passage in John of Ephesus about the impression Arethas made on Justin II later in the century,¹¹ he would have impressed Justinian even more, since he was younger and more vigorous. Justinian must have been convinced that this was his man in Oriens to watch over the Roman frontier, and this can explain his unwavering support for him until his death in spite of Arethas' Monophysitism and the calumnies of the chief historian of the reign.

Finally, a most important factor in Justinian's thinking about Arethas and the Ghassānids must have been Theodora herself, the bulwark of Monophysitism in the capital and at the court, the seat of power. Her support must have begun even before Justinian's elevation to the throne in 527. While she continued to support Monophysitism after 527, she must also be considered one of the factors that were operative in Justinian's attitude even before his elevation to the throne.

Theodora

The influence of Theodora on Justinian, especially as far as the Monophysite movement is concerned, is well known. Therefore, this section will treat only her possible early contacts and relations with Arethas and the Ghassānids, which must be the key to her support of the former's extraordinary mission in Constantinople around 540. As the Monophysite empress, Theodora was well aware of the situation in the Byzantine Orient, which she had learned of before her marriage to Justinian. She must have been aware of the Ghassānid presence as a Monophysite army. But personal contacts or interest in the supreme phylarch, Arethas, who came to her around 540 and through her succeeded in procuring the historic ordinations, must have existed quite early in his career. She may have met him personally, possibly when he came for his investiture as king around 530.¹² Alternatively, influential Monophysites may have drawn her attention to the central and crucial position of Arethas in reviving and protecting the Monophysite movement.

Theodora and Severus. Charles Diehl suggested that Severus (who preached especially to women) and Patriarch Timothy exercised a salutary influence on Theodora while she was still in Egypt and before she met Justinian.¹³ This is

¹¹ *BASIC* I.1, 287, 338.

¹² When exactly Arethas came for his investiture as *basileus* is not clear. His appointment took place in 529 in the middle of the Persian war. It is likely that the journey to Constantinople was postponed until after the end of the war, in which he was heavily involved as the commander of the *foederati*. The period 532–555 must have been an appropriate one; there was the Endless Peace with Persia and the truce with the Monophysites.

¹³ C. Diehl, *Byzantine Empresses*, trans. H. Bell and T. de Kerpely (London, 1964), 49.

an attractive suggestion, and it may be supported by the letter preserved in Zacharia concerning Severus' journey to Constantinople in the early 530s. Justinian's invitation to Severus, "the arch-heretic," who was deposed as soon as the house of Justin came to power, could only have been at the instance of Theodora. A strong affirmative statement on her interest in him is contained in Severus' own letter to the monks and priests of Oriens, after he was denounced and exiled again, where he describes her as the "Christ-worshipping queen."¹⁴ When he finally came to Constantinople in 535, he again met Theodora, now the empress. As has been indicated earlier, this was the year that witnessed the triumph of Monophysitism in the capital, during which Severus, the great administrator, almost arranged the Monophysite takeover of Oriens with the exception of the see of Antioch. It is consonant with this achievement that he should have drawn the attention of the empress to the Ghassānids and to Arethas as pivotal for the further progress of Monophysitism in Oriens; and if Arethas was himself, too, in the capital sometime in the early 530s, this would have established personal contact between empress and phylarch in addition to the recommendations of Severus.

Severus and the Ghassānids. Severus was exiled in 518, some ten years before Arethas appeared on the scene of Arab-Byzantine relations. But he knew Jabala, his father, during his patriarchate over Antioch from 513 to 518, and he would have known about the Ghassānid withdrawal from the service during the reign of Justin. News of the extraordinary *Basileia* of Arethas around 530 would have reached the Monophysite world in Egypt, where Severus was living in exile. This must have aroused Severus' interest in the services of the Ghassānids as protectors of Monophysitism. Monophysite clerics including Severus and Philoxenus are known to have approached Near Eastern rulers in order to seek their protection for the Monophysite church. Philoxenus wrote to Abū Ya'fur of Ḥīra, as did Severus himself to the Lakhmid Mundir.¹⁵ It is only natural that Severus should have thought of the Ghassānids as protectors of the movement in Oriens, his own patriarchate, and that he should have conveyed this to Theodora personally when he was in Constantinople in 535.

Simeon of Bēth-Arshām and Theodora. The indefatigable Monophysite bishop of Bēth-Arshām in Sasanid Persia must be mentioned in this context. Even more than Severus, he was involved in ecclesiastical diplomacy and approaches to the rulers of the Near East in the interest of his confession, such as

¹⁴ The Severus-Theodora connection is recorded by Zacharia, *HE*, IX.19, versio, p. 93, lines 1-7. In a touching tribute to Theodora, Severus, in his letters to the monks of Oriens, speaks of how the empress protected him and how the monks of Oriens had prayed that she would protect Severus; *ibid.*, versio, p. 95, lines 30-32.

¹⁵ See above, 702-9.

the Lakhmid king Mundir, Emperor Anastasius, the Persian king Kawad, Jabala, the Ghassānid king, and the Negus of Ethiopia. He also visited the Monophysite kingdoms of the Near East in the 530s and is therefore likely to have visited Arethas in Ghassānland in Oriens, as he had visited his father, Jabala, at Jābiya around 520 when he invoked his aid during the crisis in South Arabia.¹⁶ His biographer, John of Ephesus, says that his last journey was to Constantinople, sometime in the 530s, where he established contact with Theodora. It is not entirely clear exactly when during that decade he visited Constantinople. If it was in 536 when Anthimus was still patriarch of Constantinople, he would have added his voice to that of Severus in support of the latter's interest in the Ghassānids as prospective protectors of the struggling Monophysite church in Oriens. If he visited Constantinople in the second half of the decade, he would have done so¹⁷ in the midst of the persecution unleashed by Justinian against the Monophysites whose instrument in Oriens was Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch.

Perhaps the foregoing paragraphs have marshaled enough evidence to explain how a soldier (Arethas) in Oriens suddenly appears around the year 540 in Constantinople and comes back to Oriens after having achieved an outstanding success in the matter of the ordination of the two bishops Jacob and Theodore. Theodora gave her unqualified support to a man whom she must already have learned of, who was recommended to her by the highest authorities of the Monophysite church—Severus of Antioch and Simeon of Bēth-Arshām.

III. THE GHASSĀNID EPISCOPATE

The sources are also silent on the Ghassānid ecclesiastical organization in this first phase, but not for the reign of Justin nor around 540 when bishops of the Ghassānids or the Arabs are mentioned, namely, John of Evaria and Theodore. So the question arises as to whether or not they had a bishop in this first phase after their return to the service in 527.

Their last bishop, it has been argued, was most probably John of Evaria,¹⁸ who was among the bishops exiled in 519. He could not have been their bishop after their return since the sources say that he died in exile in Ḥarlān. Presumably the Ghassānids remained without a bishop but were ministered to by lower ranking clerics, priests, and deacons. Yet in the Monophysite literature of the period there is the *Life of John of Tella*, written by John of Ephesus,¹⁹

¹⁶ See *Martyrs*, 161–64.

¹⁷ In addition to what John of Ephesus says about the motive for the visit, involving the church in Persia itself.

¹⁸ See above, 717–22.

¹⁹ John of Ephesus, *Life of John of Tella*, PO 18 (Paris, 1924), pp. 513–26, especially pp. 515–19.

in which he discusses the problem of ordinations around 530; the complaints of the faithful about the thinning ranks of the clerics; the reluctance of the bishops to undertake ordination out of fear; the attitude of Severus himself²⁰ who made cautious recommendations concerning the ordination of priests and deacons; and finally how John of Tella won the day and engaged in ordinations to which came candidates from distant places including Phoenicia.²¹

The Ghassānids must have been involved in this. Phoenicia was not far from Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, and with the extension of the authority of Arethas, by the conferment of the *Basileia* in 529, his phylarchal jurisdiction must have come closer to Tella and its zealous bishop, John, who most probably ordained some clerics for the Ghassānids. The matter is of some importance since the Ghassānid phylarch on whose involvement in Monophysite theology and ecclesiastical organization the sources are silent, or at least not explicitly informative, in this phase suddenly appears in the second phase heavily involved in both. The Ghassānids and their phylarch must have become involved in this first phase, and thus its elucidation provides an appropriate background for dealing with the Ghassānid role in the history of the Monophysite movement in the second phase, which opens in the year 536 with Justinian's novel against Severus and Monophysitism.

IV. THE MONOPHYSITE CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

If the sources are not explicitly informative on Arethas in this phase, they most probably contain an implied reference to him, and a most important one at that. In the *Life of Simeon, the Bishop* (of Bēth-Arshām), John of Ephesus speaks of Simeon's travels in the Monophysite world in order to refute the Nestorian contention that their confession was the prevalent one in Christendom;²² after his travels, he returns to Persia with the profession of faith of various Christian communities and peoples written in their *own languages*, and these were certainly not Nestorian confessions. Because of the extreme importance of this passage in John of Ephesus and the specificity that pervades it, it is important to quote it *in extenso*.

The good and merciful God therefore, who does not fail to reward zeal for his name, on seeing the man's purpose of mind and his zeal, and that he underwent weariness no less than that of the apostles without shrink-

²⁰ Frend, *Rise*, 260–61.

²¹ As explained by the editor and translator of the *Life*, E. W. Brooks, this was Phoenicia Maritima; see *ibid.*, 512 note 2.

²² An echo of this rivalry between the Monophysites and the Nestorians at the court of the Persian king Kawad and the attempt of each to prove that theirs was the true and best faith is reflected in *Histoire Nestorienne* (p. 126) where, of course, the Nestorians win this confessional contest and Kawad likes theirs best.

ing, himself also bestowed upon him in no less degree than upon them his gift that was given to the apostles, of speaking with new tongues. For, whatever people's country he entered, on the third day that came he would speak with them in their own tongue, thanking God who had visited him. And so also he even delivered an exposition in the chancel (βῆμα) in the churches of all the peoples to whom he went; and on this account he would declare and say to us with tears, "In this matter I recognised clearly that God had visited me and strengthened me, and that he had not withheld his grace and his mercy from me." But he reflected, "What parchments (χάρτης) and what rolls are capable of going through all this wear of long and protracted journeys through the countries without being torn to pieces?" And for this reason, and in order that the certainty of the writing might remain without suspicion of alteration, he made great linen cloths and medicated them, so that they might take writing, which also will, I think, be preserved by the believers in the land of the Persians for ever; and on them he would accordingly write the belief of every people in their own language from their archbishops, and above the belief he affixed the seals of the king of that people and of the bishops of the same and of their chief men in lead upon these cloths, and thus confirmed it, acting thus among all peoples and all tongues among the believers, going about and taking their belief and the seals of their sovereigns and of their high-priests. And thus he collected the belief of many peoples and of many tongues on these cloths. And he turned back after seven years and went away(?); and, while he was on his way back, the king in whose days he had started died, and the magnates who had been umpires, and his son succeeded him; and he proceeded to stir up war in the territories of the Romans, and his appearance before the authorities was not carried out. But it became known to all men living in the country of the Persians that the evil doctrine of Nestorius flourished there only, while all peoples and tongues abhorred it; and this glorious old man was yet more emboldened against them.²³

This passage was mentioned briefly in *The Martyrs of Najrān*,²⁴ but only as illustrating the "peregrinations of Simeon," and E. W. Brooks' reservations on the number of rulers whom Simeon visited was also noted in a chapter that attempted to make the extraordinary career of this Monophysite bishop more intelligible. The passage may now be examined for its contribution to the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in the sixth century.

Its principal value is its references to the languages of the Monophysite

²³ Trans. E. W. Brooks, PO 17 (Paris, 1923), pp. 155–57.

²⁴ *Martyrs*, 163.

Christian Orient in a detailed and specific manner that leaves no doubt about the fact that these various communities used their vernacular languages for the expression of their faith. The Monophysite world of the sixth century is fairly well known. In addition to the Syriac-speaking communities in Persia and Oriens, there were (a) the Arabs, especially the Ghassānids, who, as has been explained in the preceding chapter, were converted to Monophysitism early in the century; to the Ghassānids may be added other tribes that moved in their orbit and who also may have adopted Monophysitism in Ḥijāz or northern Arabia; (b) the Ḥimyarite community in South Arabia, now Monophysite after the Ethiopian expedition in the early 520s; (c) within South Arabia, the Arab enclave of Najrān, the city of martyrs; (d) the Ethiopians; (e) the Copts; and (f) the Armenians.²⁵

John of Ephesus does not name any of these communities, presumably because they were well known to his readers. Neither does he specify which rulers of these communities Simeon visited, but he does state categorically that he did visit them and brought back written confessions of their faith. Who were these Arab rulers, and where did they reside? The natural presumption is that the Ghassānid ruler was one of them. The Ghassānids were zealous Monophysites, and they were Simeon's first port of call on his way westward from the Land of the Two Rivers through Oriens, Arabia, and the Nile Valley. Above all, there is documentary evidence that he had actually visited their king, Jabala, in Jābiya around 520 when he invoked his aid against the Ḥimyarite persecutors of the Christians in South Arabia, as is clearly stated in the *explicit* of the letter he wrote from their camp-town.²⁶ So the probabilities are in favor of a visit to the Ghassānid ruler. The passage in John of Ephesus is not explicit on the identity of the Ghassānid king involved, nor is it so on the two Persian kings. The chances, however, are that it was Arethas whom Simeon visited, and this can be easily concluded from the references to the two Persian kings, who in this case must have been Kawad, who died in 531, and Chosroes, his son, who succeeded him. According to John of Ephesus, Simeon returned to Persia after a journey of seven years to find the Persian king, in whose days he set out, dead and his son "stirring up war in the territories of the Romans." The "war" referred to must be the second Persian war, which broke out in 540, or its antecedent, the *Strata* dispute in 539. So if Simeon had an encounter with a Ghassānid king sometime in the course of these seven years that ended around 540, it must have been Arethas, who was the Ghassānid king during this period, his father Jabala having died in 528 at the battle of Thannūris.

²⁵ Nubia was to be converted to Monophysitism later in the 540s.

²⁶ See *Martyrs*, 63.

If Simeon did indeed visit the Ghassānid ruler and brought back with him a confession of faith in Arabic, this will represent an important gain in the story of the use of Arabic as one of the languages of the Christian Orient before the rise of Islam, related to the problem of an Arabic Bible and liturgy, but distinct from it. It will mean that the Arabic language was in use for the expression of theological thought, perhaps in a simple, unsophisticated manner. In the fourth century, the Arab queen Mavia fought the Arian emperor Valens for the faith of Nicaea. It has been suggested that there was an Arabic version of the Nicene Creed in that century,²⁷ during which the Arab queen insisted on the consecration of an Arab bishop for her people and which saw the composition of Arabic odes in celebration of the Mavian victories against Valens, vouched for by Sozomen. So already in the fourth century there was an Arabic confession of faith, the Nicene Creed. In the sixth century, the Ghassānid rulers discussed theology. The Syriac sources have preserved echoes of this when Arethas accuses Chalcedonian Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, of preaching *quaternitas* and, later in the 560s, he accuses the two dissident bishops, Eugenius and Conon, of Tritheism, although he would not have used Arabic terms in these colloquies.²⁸

What this Arabic confession of faith would have consisted of may be seen in those Monophysite confessions of the 530s, preserved by Zacharia of Mytilene, when Anthimus and Theodosius wrote letters after their consecrations to state clearly their doctrinal position, which start with adherence to the Council of Nicaea.²⁹ The Arabic version of this Monophysite confession would have been expressed along these lines, written by their Monophysite ecclesiastics, one of whom was possibly John, to whom Philoxenus of Hierapolis had written on the Monophysite faith against the Nestorians.³⁰

B

The Second Phase (536–553)

I. INTRODUCTION

After fighting for Byzantium in the Arabian Peninsula and in the first Persian war, Arethas suddenly appeared in this phase as a concerned Monophysite, engaged in theological discussions, and working for the resuscitation of the Monophysite hierarchy. He continued to act as such and to intervene in the

²⁷ See *BAFOC*, 440 and note 101. Cf. V. Poggi, "Situazione linguistica dell'Oriente bizantino nel secolo V," in *Autori classici in lingue del vicino e medio Oriente*, ed. G. Fiaccadori (Rome, 1990), 120.

²⁸ See below, 746–55, 805–24.

²⁹ See, for example, the letter of Anthimus to Severus after his election to the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 535; Zacharia, *HE*, versio, pp. 96–100.

³⁰ See above, 695.

interests of his confession until the end of his reign. In order to understand his new role and his services to the Monophysite cause, it is necessary to set this against the background of ecclesiastical history in this period.³¹ The two most relevant elements in this background are: (1) the counter-*coup* staged by the Chalcedonians in 536, which returned the patriarchates of the East to Chalcedonian incumbents, and the persecution of the Monophysites that followed in the latter part of the 530s; and (2) the attempts of Justinian to reconcile the Monophysites in the 540s, which culminated in the promulgation of the edict on the Three Chapters, in which he condemned three fifth-century theologians, all of whom were anathema to the Monophysites.

1. Just as the combination of Severus and Theodora was responsible for the Monophysite triumph, it was the collaboration of two firm Chalcedonians—Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, and Pope Agapetus—that brought about the counter-revolution. The arrival of Agapetus in Constantinople sealed the fate of Monophysitism in the capital. Chalcedonian Anthimus was deposed, and Menas was consecrated instead, while Theodosius left Alexandria and ultimately resided with Anthimus in Constantinople in the palace of Hormisdas. The patriarchal turnover was followed by a synod (May–June 536) that condemned Anthimus, and an imperial edict confirmed the synod and uttered the harshest pronouncement against Severus, who left the city and died in exile in Egypt in 538. A persecution of Monophysites followed, principally undertaken by Ephraim, and Monophysite ecclesiastical writers speak of martyrdoms. John of Tella was the victim of this persecution. He was arrested near Singara and died in prison in 538.

2. After disposing of the Origenistic heresies in Palestine in the early 540s, Justinian turned again to reconciling the Monophysites by issuing the edict on the Three Chapters,³² in which he condemned Theodore of Mop-suestia, certain specified works of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa, all of whom were offensive to the Monophysites. The four patriarchs signed it under imperial pressure, as did Pope Vigilius, who was summoned to Constantinople and finally gave his approval by issuing his *Judicatum* in April 548. The sequel of the *Judicatum* was unrest in the Western church which turned against the pope and the *Judicatum*; it, in turn, was then revoked by the pope himself; all of which led to the convocation of the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553. Justinian's Edict of Three Chapters and the *Judicatum* were Theodora's final triumph; she died soon after in 548.

Against these two elements of the general ecclesiastical history of this

³¹ For this see the chapter in A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV (Paris, 1945), 457–66; and Frend, *Rise*, 273–95.

³² The edict has not survived, and its date is uncertain. Fliche and Martin (op. cit., 460) give no date, nor does Frend in *Rise*. Stein (*HBE*, 634) gives the end of 543 or 544; Bury (*HLRE*, 384) dates it to 546.

period, may now be set the two accounts of Arethas and his involvement in the Monophysite movement that have survived in the sources: his encounter with the patriarch of Antioch, Ephraim; and his journey to Constantinople to secure the ordination of the two bishops, Jacob and Theodore, in the early 540s.

II. ARETHAS AND EPHRAIM

In a precious passage, Michael the Syrian³³ has preserved a detailed account of an encounter between Arethas, the Ghassānid supreme phylarch, and Ephraim, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch. It is remarkable for being a detailed account; the data included in it reveal for the first time the Ghassānid phylarch not as a soldier on the battlefield but as a loyal Monophysite arguing for the correctness of Monophysite theology. It is no doubt taken out of the *Ecclesiastical History* of the writer who paid special attention to the Ghassānids and was one of Michael's sources, namely, John of Ephesus. The passage deserves a detailed analysis but before engaging in this, it is necessary to make two observations.

1. Although this is the first time that a Ghassānid phylarch discusses theology in the sources, it is unlikely that this was the first time that he did so. Arethas had been supreme phylarch for some ten years and had witnessed the tribulations of his church to which, like his father before him, he was sensitive. It has been argued³⁴ that he must have been on the horizon of Severus and Theodora, as a ruler who could play a role in the protection of Monophysitism. And it is not likely that he was a mere soldier completely uninformed about the elementary doctrines of his confession. Simeon of Bēth-Arshām may have procured from the Ghassānid clerics a confession of the true Monophysite faith during the reign of his father, Jabala,³⁵ and Philoxenus may have written on theological matters to one, John the Arab, who could easily have been the bishop of the Ghassānids.³⁶ If so, Arethas was not uninformed about the theology of Monophysitism. Indeed, toward the end of his reign he presided over a church council that tried the case of the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon.³⁷ The passage in Michael the Syrian, then, can be set against this theological background for the Ghassānid interlocutor, and it reveals the non-military facet of the personality of the supreme phylarch.

2. The date of the encounter is not clear in the *Chronicle* of Michael whose dates are sometimes unreliable. He places it after the journey of the

³³ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 246–48; for the Syriac text, see col. 1, p. 310 to col. 2, p. 311.

³⁴ See above, 739.

³⁵ For this see above, 740.

³⁶ On this see above, 695.

³⁷ See below, 805–8.

phylarch to Constantinople to secure the ordination of Jacob and Theodore, and so suggests a date in the early 540s. This is difficult to accept; the chances are that this happened in the late 530s,³⁸ and in support of this, the following may be adduced.

a. The early 540s were the years of the second Persian war, in which the empire was heavily engaged in fighting with Persia. It is unlikely that the emperor who, according to the account, asked the patriarch to meet Arethas, would have initiated such an attempt to convert Arethas in the midst of the war, especially as the imperial attitude toward the Monophysites was influenced by political events. With a war on his hands in an East that was full of Monophysites, of whom the Ghassānid *foederati* formed an important part, it is incredible that Justinian would have engaged in such follies.

b. The case for the 530s is thus strong, especially as Ephraim died in 545 and the late 530s would have been the only period during which he could have attempted the conversion of Arethas. This is confirmed by the fact that it was in this very period after the Chalcedonian *coup* of 536 and Justinian's edict against Severus that the second persecution of the Monophysites was let loose, and Ephraim himself was its agent. In a well-known chapter,³⁹ Zacharia of Mytilene states that Justinian ordered him to traverse Oriens in order to bring back the Monophysites to the Chalcedonian fold in the fifteenth year of his reign, that is, 536/37, which thus must be the year of this encounter between Arethas and Ephraim.⁴⁰ The eastern front was quiet after the conclusion of the Endless Peace in 532, and so this attempt to convert Arethas could have taken place at that time. Furthermore, the passage in Michael states that Ephraim did this at the insistence of the emperor, and the chapter in Zacharia confirms this when it says that it was the emperor who asked Ephraim to undertake this missionary campaign. At the end of the chapter, Zacharia describes the journey of Ephraim to Palestine and thence to Egypt,⁴¹ and this brings him close to Arethas geographically, since the latter's headquarters were in the

³⁸ A date in the late 530s is also suggested by the phrase "avant sa mort" with reference to Ephraim, used by Michael in referring to the time when Ephraim attempted to convert Arethas. The phrase could suggest a year just before the death of Ephraim in 545, but the phrase is misleading; see *Chronique*, I, p. 246, line 18. The Monophysites hated Ephraim who was a persecutor and did not wish him well; hence the phrase, perhaps unconsciously, expresses Monophysite hopes for the death of Ephraim and their release from his firm grip.

It is noteworthy that Michael does not introduce the long passage on Ephraim and Arethas with the customary "en cette année" but leaves it undated; hence the attempt to date it is not frustrated by an explicit statement that dates other events in Michael. J. S. Trimmingham dates the encounter to 538, but gives no reasons; see his *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London, 1979), 231.

³⁹ Zacharia, *HE*, versio, Book X, chap. 1, pp. 118–20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118, lines 19–24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120, lines 1–5.

Provincia Arabia and in the Golān, in Palaestina Secunda, and this provides the right locale and context for the meeting between the two.

The passage in Michael involving the encounter of the phylarch and the patriarch may be summarized as follows. Emperor Justinian asks Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, to approach Arethas, in the hope of converting him to the Chalcedonian position. Arethas refuses and accuses the Chalcedonians of having perverted the Holy Trinity into a Quaternity. Ephraim asks him whether it was just to reject what 630 ecclesiastics had decided at Chalcedon and follow the small number of those who dissented. Arethas answers him through a simile to the effect that as a tiny rat found in a cauldron full of meat can infect the whole mass of pure meat, so does the Tome of Leo infect the entire doctrine of the church. Ephraim then tries to make him accept communion from him, but Arethas invites the patriarch to a feast at which only camel meat is served. When Ephraim refuses to eat, Arethas says that just as Ephraim has refused to eat what he had offered him, so he would refuse to accept the oblation that Ephraim had offered. In the wealth of details that it provides, the passage recalls that in Malchus on the fifth-century phylarch Amorkesos, of the reign of Leo. In the interests of clarity, the long passage, translated by J. B. Chabot, will be divided into two parts.

1

Héret, fils de Gabala, roi des Tāiyayê chrétiens, et ses familiers étaient fort scandalisés du Synode, et ne mangeaient pas même le pain avec les Chalcédoniens. Éphrem le Juif, d'Antioche, fut envoyé près d'eux, avant sa mort, par l'empereur. Il dit à Héret: "Pourquoi êtes-vous scandalisés à notre sujet et au sujet de l'Église?" Héret répondit: "Nous ne sommes pas scandalisés au sujet de l'Église de Dieu, mais par le mal que vous avez causé à la foi. Nous nous éloignons (de vous) parce que vous introduisez une quaternité au lieu de la Trinité, et que vous obligez les hommes à renier la vraie foi." Éphrem ajouta encore: "Il te paraît donc juste, ô roi, qu'une assemblée de 630 personnes, à moins que ce ne soient des comédiens, soit anathématisée; et, étant donné que tous étaient évêques, comment pourrait-on mépriser tous ceux-ci et accepter le petit nombre de ceux qui sont hérétiques?" Héret lui répondit en disant: "Je suis un barbare et un soldat; je ne sais pas lire les Écritures, cependant, je te proposerai un exemple: quand je commande à mes serviteurs de préparer un festin à mes troupes, de remplir les chaudières de viande pure de mouton et de boeuf, et de la cuire, s'il se trouve dans les chaudières un rat nain, par ta vie, patriarche!, toute cette viande pure est-elle souillée par ce rat, oui ou non?" Celui-ci répondit: "Oui!" Alors, Héret reprit: "Si une grande masse de chair est corrompue par un petit rat infect, comment

toute l'assemblée de ceux qui ont adhéré à cette hérésie impure ne serait-elle pas souillée? Car tous ont donné par écrit leur adhésion au *Tome* de Léon; que est ce rat infect."⁴²

1. Arethas is described accurately with his patronymic and the fact of his kingship over the Christian Arabs. The term "ses familiers," his intimates, acquaintances, is somewhat strange, since one would have expected another term.⁴³ These, however, are likely to be his phylarchs, family, or members of his retinue, who were all Monophysites, as was his army.

2. The "Synod" in Monophysite literature means Chalcedon, but the use of such a term at the beginning of the passage about a council that had taken place a century before could suggest a synod that is recent and close to 537, when the encounter took place. It is possible that Arethas and the Monophysites were still "in shock" after the synod of Constantinople in 536 in which Justinian blasted the Monophysites, especially Severus. But the context and subsequent references to Chalcedon suggest that it is a reference to that council.

3. Noteworthy is the statement that Ephraim approached Arethas on the orders of Justinian himself. This is consonant with the *coup* of 536 in which the patriarchal sees were turned over to Chalcedonians and, in its wake, the emperor thought the same might be done in Oriens with the supreme phylarchate. In so doing, he may have taken a leaf out of the notebook of Theodora, who always went to the top, to the rulers and influential figures, in order to influence the course of events. This also represents the first recorded instance of attempts to win over the Ghassānid phylarch to the Chalcedonian position, an attempt that was to be fruitlessly repeated later in the century with Arethas' grandson Nu'mān.

4. Most interesting is Arethas' answer to Ephraim when he broached the topic with him. Arethas has two objections: that the Chalcedonians introduced a Quaternity into the Trinity and that forceful methods were used in leading men away from the true faith.

Significant is the use of the term Quaternity (*quaternitas*) by the soldier, Arethas. This is a technical theological term that became part of the christological disputes since Chalcedon. By speaking of the two natures, the Chalcedonians left themselves open to the charge that they were perverting

⁴² Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 246-47.

⁴³ French "ses familiers" translates Syriac *yādū'aybôn* (*Chronique*, II, p. 310, first col., line 9 from bottom). The pronominal suffix in the Syriac word is not singular, as translated by Chabot, but plural, *bôn*. Perhaps Chabot translated it thus because he thought a *pluralis maiestatis* is involved, since the natural reference of the plural suffix is to king Arethas. He is probably right, although the plural suffix may conceivably be construed with the plural *Ṭayâyê* that immediately precedes it.

the Trinity into a Quaternity. It was a neat and simple term which could easily be understood and used by laymen, and so it was by Arethas.⁴⁴ The term had been revived as recently as 536 by Anthimus, the newly elected Monophysite patriarch of Constantinople, in his letters to the two Monophysite patriarchs, Severus and Theodosius, as part of his confession of Monophysite faith.⁴⁵ This raises the question of whether Arethas was repeating *quaternitas* as used by Anthimus, which he might have picked up when he was in Constantinople recently. There is no way of knowing. It is also possible that Ghassānid familiarity with Monophysite christology and its anti-Chalcedonian polemics goes back to an earlier period than the 530s and that Arethas was familiar with *quaternitas* even before Anthimus used it in his two letters to Severus and Theodosius. In a previous chapter, it has been suggested that Philoxenus possibly wrote to a Ghassānid bishop when he addressed a theological communication to a certain John the Arab in the reign of Anastasius;⁴⁶ it has also been suggested that Simeon of Bēth-Arshām possibly visited Jabala, the father of Arethas, when he undertook a journey of seven years traveling in the Monophysite kingdoms of the Near East. His biographer adds that he brought with him the confessions of the various Monophysite communities.⁴⁷ If so, then Jabala would have been conversant with the anti-Chalcedonian polemic which probably included the term *quaternitas* with which the Monophysites reproached the Chalcedonians. Thus Ghassānid involvement in the christology of the period could possibly go back to the first decades of the century, and Arethas could have grown up in an atmosphere in which such a term as *quaternitas* was not unknown.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1207) lauds Arethas for his reply involving *quaternitas*: "un doctrinaire du monophysisme n'aurait pas mieux dit."

⁴⁵ In his letter to Severus, Anthimus expresses himself against quaternity: "Quare et rectissime unus e Trinitate sancta et connaturali est ante incarnationem et post incarnationem, cum numerum Trinitati non addiderit, numerum quaternitatis"; Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 98, lines 25–27. In his letter to Theodosius, Anthimus says: "Ideoque rectissime unus e Trinitate sancta et connaturali est, antequam incorporaretur, et postquam incorporatus est, nec Trinitati numerus quartus additus est"; *ibid.*, p. 113, lines 8–11.

⁴⁶ See above, 695.

⁴⁷ See above, 741–44.

⁴⁸ For Marcellinus Comes on *quaternitas*, see *Chron. ad annum 512*: "in hymnum trinitatis Deipassianorum quaternitas additur"; quoted in Frend, *Rise*, 269 note 1. The term possibly appears in the third decade of the 6th century in a work attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria, *A Panegyric on Macarius*, trans. D. W. Johnson, CSCO, *Scriptores Coptici* 42 (Louvain, 1980), p. 37, line 13. On the question of authenticity and dating, see the introduction, pp. 8–11. The term appears late in the century in *A Panegyric on Apollo, Archimandrite of the Monastery of Isaac*, trans. K. H. Kuhn, CSCO, *Scriptores Coptici* 40 (Louvain, 1978), p. 12, line 15. For recent works on Christianity and Monophysite polemics, see D. Johnson, "Anti-Chalcedonian Polemics in Coptic Texts, 451–641," in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. B. A. Pearson and J. E. Goehring (Philadelphia, 1986), 216–34; and I. R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite* (Cambridge, 1988).

The application of force during this second persecution conducted by Ephraim in Oriens was noted by Zacharia.⁴⁹ This would have especially outraged Arethas as it might have violated the Arab concept of *jīwār*, the right of refuge for the one who seeks protection. This had a parallel in Arab-Byzantine ecclesiastical relations in the fourth century during the revolt of Queen Mavia against Valens. Moses, the Arab bishop (unlike Arethas) turns away from theological arguments with Lucius, the Arian of Alexandria, and concentrates on the use of force by the Arians against the Orthodox.⁵⁰ Arethas did better than Moses since he availed himself of a theological argument.⁵¹

5. In his reply concerning the Monophysite repudiation of the 630 bishops assembled at Chalcedon, Ephraim addresses Arethas as king. Although this expression does not come in an official document, yet it is significant and suggests that Arethas was addressed as king after the conferment of the *Basileia* in 529. The passage exudes regal bearing on the part of Arethas, even when he was addressing a powerful personality in Oriens, Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch and a former *comes Orientis*.⁵²

6. Arethas' reply to Ephraim's reference to the 630 bishops assembled at Chalcedon contains many noteworthy elements that reveal some facts of his personality not usually documented in the sources which present him as a soldier. For not replying in theological terms, Arethas excuses himself by saying, "I am a barbarian and a soldier." The use of the term "barbarian" by Arethas himself is significant. This suggests that he was not a Roman citizen, just as his *foederati* were not.⁵³ Or he may have used it with a different implication, namely, that he was not a cultured Hellene, not a man of books and learning but a soldier and a man of action, and he hastens to add explicitly that he was such, all of which is preparatory to the illustration he was about to give in answering Ephraim. Perhaps Arethas' employment of "barbarian" may even be an expression of a self-image. It is normally used by the *Rhomaioi* and applied to those who were not, especially if they did not belong to the

⁴⁹ Zacharia, *HE*, versio, Book X, chap. 1, p. 118, lines 21 ff. Mention is made of the tribune Clementinus who accompanied Ephraim while the latter was traveling in Oriens, forcibly converting the Monophysites of the area.

⁵⁰ On Moses and Lucius as a parallel to Arethas and Ephraim, see *BAFIC*, 153–55.

⁵¹ Cf. the response of his grandson Nu'mān to Maurice in a similar context; *BASIC* I.1, 529–32.

⁵² It is noteworthy that Pseudo-Dionysius conceives of Arethas as one of the rulers of the earth in company with Chosroes, Justinian, Abraha of South Arabia, and Andoug of Ethiopia; see *Chronicon Anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum*, versio, ed. and trans. R. Hespel, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, vol. 213, II, p. 83, lines 3–6. It is relevant to state that Ephraim does not address him as "my lord, patrician," as Magnus addresses Arethas' son, Mundir, who, too, was king. This could argue that Arethas, as has been argued in this volume, was not yet *patricius*. On Arethas' *Basileia* and *patriciatu*s, see *BASIC* I.1, 95–109, 288–97.

⁵³ The Arab *foederati* were not Roman *cives*, but it is possible that their supreme phylarchs may have been endowed with honorary citizenships.

Graeco-Roman establishment; and so its use by Arethas himself is revelatory of self-confidence in his own identity as a Ghassānid, which shrugged off the overtones of the term "barbarian."

Equally important is the following sentence, wrongly translated by Chabot as "je ne sais pas lire les Écritures." The Syriac original uses the past tense and simply says "I did not read." The object of the verb is not what the French suggests with its capital *e*, "les Écritures," but simply "books." The French could suggest that Arethas was illiterate, which of course he was not.⁵⁴ He simply wants to say that he is a man of action and a soldier and cannot continue to discuss theology as can academics and ecclesiastics. As to the "books" mentioned in his reply, the natural interpretation of the term is the relevant one in this context, namely, theological works on christology; but it may simply mean books in general and so strengthens what he wants to emphasize, that he was not a scholar but a soldier and so he is not expected to answer as scholars do.

The illustration that Arethas gives in reply to Ephraim's question on the assembly of 630 bishops at Chalcedon is taken from the world of the Arab kitchen in the Ghassānid barracks. The reference to mutton and beef suggests that these were considered choice meats worthy of being served at a feast. The presumption is that ordinarily the soldiers ate camel meat, mentioned later in the account, and that on special occasions when a feast was ordered, the meats would be different.

The reference to the Tome of Leo and its comparison to the small rat that infects the whole meal if it is found in the meat cauldron are both noteworthy. The implication is that the 630 bishops were uncorrupted until they were influenced by the Tome, so the number cited by Ephraim does not sound impressive. More important, it testifies to the fact that Arethas was not uninformed theologically. He knows of the Tome of Leo and mentions it by name.⁵⁵

2

Éphrem ne pouvant faire changer H̄éret d'avis, commença à le tourmenter pour qu'il participât à la communion que lui, Éphrem, lui donnerait. Le roi H̄éret lui dit: "Aujourd'hui, prends place avec nous au festin." Et il commanda, en langue arabe, à ses gens, de n'apporter à la table que de la viande de chameau. Quand ils l'eurent apportée, H̄éret dit à Éphrem: "Bénis notre table." Il fut troublé et ne la bénit pas. H̄éret mangea selon sa coutume. Éphrem dit: "Vous avez souillé la table, car vous avez apporté devant nous de la viande de chameau." H̄éret répondit: "Pourquoi

⁵⁴ The word order in Syriac emphasizes "books," not "read": "books I have not read." This is further confirmation that illiteracy is not the question but bookishness.

⁵⁵ The comparison of the rat with the Tome of Leo is also amusing in view of the name of the pope. In Ghassānid terms, the lion was really a rat!

veux-tu me contraindre de prendre ton oblation, puisque tu te crois souillé par ma nourriture? Sache donc que ton oblation est plus méprisable pour nous que ne l'est pour toi cette viande de chameau que nous mangeons; car en elle se trouvent cachés l'apostasie et l'abandon de la foi orthodoxe." Éphrem rougit et s'en alla, sans avoir pu séduire Héret.⁵⁶

1. The turn in the dialogue between Ephraim and Arethas takes place when Ephraim, instead of continuing his theological argument with Arethas, attempts to have him participate in the Chalcedonian communion and receive the sacrament at his hands. This, of course, Arethas would not do, and his refusal was consonant with the attempt of the Monophysites to have their own hierarchy in this period, in order to insure continuity of worship and sacraments within the Monophysite church.

2. Arethas gives orders for the feast in Arabic. This raises the question of what language he spoke with Ephraim. The clear implication of the account is that he spoke with him not in Arabic but in some other language, either Greek or Syriac. So Arethas was probably bilingual since no interpreter is mentioned in the account.

3. His order that they should bring *only* camel meat to the table could suggest that the Ghassānids ate not only camel meat⁵⁷ but also other kinds of meat such as the mutton and beef described earlier in the account, while the reference to a table⁵⁸ suggests that they did not eat reclining on the floor. His request that the patriarch bless the food suggests that this was normal in the Ghassānid camp.

4. Ephraim's refusal to eat camel meat is noteworthy. This was of course forbidden in the Old Testament for the Jews (cf. Deut. 14:7). Ephraim was a Christian but was called "the Jew" by the Monophysites for purely theological reasons as part of their polemics against him. The appellation "Jew," therefore, has nothing to do with his refusal to eat camel meat, unless he was a conservative who obeyed some Old Testament rules, as certain Christian communities such as the Ethiopians do. Most likely he was simply not used to eating it and thus refused it. Perhaps it was this kind of food that certain ecclesiastics considered "bad food" in the Provincia Arabia when they visited it, and stayed with the Ghassānids for a short time, later in the century.⁵⁹

General Conclusions

As already pointed out, the passage in Michael the Syrian is taken from the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus, the historian of the Ghassānid dynasty, who must have met Arethas personally in Constantinople, as did his

⁵⁶ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 247-48.

⁵⁷ As mentioned again later in the account.

⁵⁸ Not once but twice.

⁵⁹ See below, 879-80, cf. 927-29.

son Mundir. It illustrates the great loss that the history of the dynasty has experienced by the non-survival of the *Ecclesiastical History* in its entirety. Arethas lived a long and active life, and this life must have been full of episodes such as this solitary one that has survived in the life of a Ghassānid king who reigned for forty years.

The chief interest of this passage is that it deals with non-military matters, unlike those in Procopius, which have prejudiced the perception of Arethas and his Ghassānids as a military group of rude soldiers. The passage gives rare glimpses of the private life of the Ghassānids. Among the aspects of Ghassānid life it illuminates is the religious, when the supreme phylarch appears as a "theologian" who talks intelligently about *quaternitas* and the Tome of Leo.

The dialogue with Ephraim reveals Arethas as a powerful personality who dominates the scene even when the dialogue was with no less a figure than the influential patriarch of Antioch, and a former *comes Orientis* at that. The power of his personality is confirmed by the impression he made on Justin II late in his life in 563. Twenty-five years earlier, when he met Ephraim, he must have looked even more impressive. In addition to the ease with which he dominates the scene, there is his intelligence in directing the course of the dialogue with the patriarch, who asks an extremely embarrassing question. Arethas cleverly parries the patriarch's thrust, and when Ephraim offers to give him communion, he replies by offering an oblation of his own—camel meat! He reminds one of the Arabs whom Theodoret of Cyrrhus in the preceding century lauded for their intellectual acuity in argument.⁶⁰

Although the Ghassānid *foederati* were Byzantinized in some ways, yet they retained a strong sense of their Arab identity, conveyed vividly in the Arabic sources, especially contemporary poetry. But this passage in Syriac provides additional materials for their private life and its various elements: (a) the Arab kitchen in the Ghassānid barracks; (b) the kinds of meat they ate; (c) cauldrons may be added to their utensils, and tables to the furniture of their dining room; (d) benediction is said before they break bread.

Arethas' refusal to convert to the Chalcedonian confession invites comparison with the case of another *foederatus* in the same decade. In 534 Gelimer, the Arian Vandal, adorned the triumph of Belisarius in the Hippodrome after he was brought as a captive to Constantinople. Although beaten and living as a prisoner of war in Constantinople, he consistently refused to renounce his Arian confession.

The bright light shed by this precious passage in Michael the Syrian makes the historian of the Ghassānid dynasty regret the loss of the original

⁶⁰ See the present writer in *BAFIC*, 156–59.

from which it was excerpted. But even this was not available to Nöldeke when he wrote his classic on the Ghassānids since he had before him not the Syriac version of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian but the Armenian version which omitted this passage. If Nöldeke had had this passage before him, he would have changed his views on how much theology the Ghassānid Arethas knew,⁶¹ and with it his other related views on the dynasty, such as the degree of sedentarization that they attained.

III. ARETHAS AND THE CONSECRATIONS OF 542/43: JACOB AND THEODORE

Monophysite historians⁶² explicitly credit Arethas with a major role in the resuscitation of the Monophysite hierarchy in the early 540s and assign this role to the sixteenth year of Justinian's reign, that is, to 542/43. Modern historians have recognized this role and emphasized it.⁶³ But the passages in the Syriac writers that document it have not been examined in detail, and they raise important questions which remain to be answered.

The context within which Arethas' decisive intervention took place has been touched upon briefly earlier in this chapter when Justinian's efforts to reconcile the Monophysites reached a climax in the promulgation of the edict on the Three Chapters.⁶⁴ The more immediate and relevant background to Arethas' intervention must, however, be sought in the crisis that the Monophysite movement was going through in this period, the latter part of the 530s, which witnessed what Monophysite historians call the second persecution, unleashed by Patriarch Ephraim of Antioch. The issue was that of the consecration of bishops for the Monophysite church after their ranks had been depleted by exile and persecution,⁶⁵ a period of tribulation that reached its climax in the martyrdom of John, bishop of Tella, in 538. Arethas' encounter with Ephraim was set within this context, and it was a contribution only in the sense that he kept himself and his Ghassānid Arabs within the Monophysite fold. But now he goes further than a passive role into something more active; he appears in Constantinople and persuades the empress to help toward the consecration of two bishops for the church, Jacob and Theodore. In so doing, Arethas was instrumental in reestablishing the Monophysite hierarchy and preserving it from extinction.

⁶¹ Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 21, lines 5–8.

⁶² In addition to John of Ephesus, who will be discussed at length in this chapter, may be added Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 245–46, and Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. J. B. Abbeloos and T. J. Lamy (Louvain, 1872), I, 217–19.

⁶³ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 159–60; Stein, *HBE*, II, 624–25; Devreesse, *PA*, 75; and Frend, *Rise*, 284–85.

⁶⁴ See above, 745.

⁶⁵ Well analyzed by Frend, *Rise*, 283–84.

Michael the Syrian's laconic statement explains Arethas' intervention simply and clearly: "En cette année eut lieu l'ordination de deux évêques: les saints Jacques de Pesilta, pour Édesse, et Theodorus pour Ḥirta de Na^cman, dans la ville impériale même, par les soins et les instances de Ḥéret, et par la sollicitude de l'impératrice Theodora. Le pape Theodosius les ordonna."⁶⁶

It is, however, John of Ephesus, who was a contemporary and witness of these events and who knew the personalities involved, that is the primary and reliable source. The fuller account involving Arethas comes not in the *Life of James (Jacob)*⁶⁷ but in the *Life of James and Theodore*.⁶⁸ It is unfortunate that his account of this in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* has not survived, and so the only source that goes back directly to him is his *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, a mine of information for eastern asceticism. In his *Historia* he probably provided data for answering all the questions that will be presently raised. His account in the *Life of James and Theodore* reads as follows.

Before these things therefore, in the sixteenth year of the reign of Justinian, after the time of the martyrdom of the blessed combatant (ἄγωνιστής) for religion, John bishop of the city of Thella, at the hands of Ephraim of Antioch, when a lack of priests had consequently arisen in the countries of the east and of the west, and especially of bishops, then the glorious Ḥereth Bar Gabala, the great king of the Saracens, with many others asked the Christ-loving queen Theodora to give orders that two or three bishops might immediately be instituted by the orthodox (ὀρθόδοξοι) in Syria. And, since the believing queen was desirous of furthering everything that would assist the opponents of the synod of Chalcedon, she gave orders and two blessed men, well-trying and divine persons, whose names were James and Theodore, were chosen and instituted, one for Ḥirtha of the Saracens, that is Theodore, and James for the city of Edessa. And, while the blessed Theodore exercised authority in the southern and western countries, and the whole of the desert and

⁶⁶ *Chronique*, II, 245–46. The toponym Ḥirta de Nu^cmān in the passage is an oversight on the part of Michael, since this is the capital not of the Ghassānids but of the Lakhmids, the well-known city of Ḥīra. It is correctly described as Ḥīrthā of the Saracens, the Ghassānid Ḥīrthā, in the *Life of James and Theodore*, written by John of Ephesus, and there is no doubt whatsoever that this was the Ghassānid (not Lakhmid) Ḥīrthā. And yet E. W. Brooks seems uncertain which of the two it was when, in a footnote, he says that it is "probably different from Ḥirtha d³ Nu^cmān, the seat of the Persian Arabs"; PO 19 (Paris, 1926); p. 154 note 1. Honigmann (*Évêques*, 161 note 2) understood the distinction between the two and indicated the mistakes of scholars, ancient and modern, who confused them.

⁶⁷ See the *Life of James*, PO 18 (Paris, 1924), p. 692.

⁶⁸ *Life of James and Theodore*, 153–54. While the *Life of James* is an account of Jacob's life in its entirety, the *Life of James and Theodore* emphasizes his consecration in 542/43. It begins with that crucial episode, elaborates on how it came about, and continues to describe the achievements of Jacob as a bishop; so it is the more important *Life* in this respect.

Arabia and Palestine, as far as Jerusalem, the blessed James, having armed himself with religion, and clothed himself in the zeal of heroism, extended his course over all the countries not only of Syria and the whole of Armenia and of Cappadocia, all of which down to the little ones were especially distinguished and strong in orthodoxy (ὀρθοδοξία) no less than Syria, and besides these in the countries also of Cilicia and the whole of Isauria and of Pamphylia and Lycaonia and Lycia and Phrygia and Caria and Asia, and in the islands of the sea Cyprus and Rhodes, and Chios and Mitylene, and as far as the royal city of Constantinople.⁶⁹

The passage involves two Arabs: Arethas, the Ghassānid king, and Theodore, the Arab bishop of the Ghassānids. In the interests of clarity, it is best to treat them separately.

Arethas

John of Ephesus expressly says that the initiative for the ordination came from Arethas, whom he describes as “glorious,” *mshabḥā*,⁷⁰ which gives him his rank in the Byzantine system of ranks and titles, and he refers to him as the “great king of the Saracens,”⁷¹ with reference to the extraordinary *Basileia* conferred on him by Justinian around 530.

The year in which Arethas took the initiative is said by John of Ephesus to have been the sixteenth year of Justinian’s reign. This, then, must be the year 542/43. Justinian became co-emperor with Justin on 1 April 527 and sole emperor on 1 August of the same year on the death of Justin. So if the sixteenth year of his reign is calculated from August, chances are that the initiative took place in 543 rather than 542.

John says that “many others” also asked the empress, Theodora, to help in this matter. Although prominence is given to Arethas, since he is mentioned by name and in a flattering manner that indicates he was the spirit and his was the influence that counted, others are associated with him. Who these were is not clear, but they were possibly members of the Arab federate establishment, phylarchs close to Arethas, who bring to mind the *familiers*⁷² mentioned by Michael in the passage that described the encounter between Arethas and Ephraim, and who were outraged by the synod.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See *BASIC* I.1, 516–17.

⁷¹ Noteworthy is the fact that his patronymic, “Son of Jabala,” is used after his name. Although this is normal, it might also reflect the fact that his illustrious father, Jabala, who had dominated Arab-Byzantine relations for some thirty years, was still alive in the memory of contemporaries. In 531, when Arethas took part in the campaign in Armenia under Sittas, he was referred to only by his patronymic, “Son of Jabala”; Zacharia, *HE*, IX.vi; above, *BASIC* I.1, 142 with note 415. In the Arabic sources his patronymic always appears with his name, Arethas.

⁷² Above, 749.

The passage suggests that Arethas was a well-known figure to Theodora and, what is more, influential with her. Earlier⁷³ it was suggested that as a leading Monophysite and a celebrated commander in Oriens, he was brought to the attention of Theodora by the leading Monophysites of the period, especially Severus, as a personality to be reckoned with and who could be relied on to further the cause of Monophysitism.

How did it come about that a soldier such as Arethas took the initiative in this important matter, according to John of Ephesus? A conjunction of events and circumstances could easily explain this. Arethas, as has been explained, was not a rude soldier but a zealous Christian and a dyed-in-the-wool Monophysite, and it must have grieved him to witness the tribulation of his church in this period of the second persecution, in addition to the disarray of the ecclesiastical organization with no clerics to insure worship and to administer sacraments.⁷⁴ Moreover, his own *foederati* had been without a bishop for a number of years. He was a man of action and must have felt that his church needed action from him at this juncture. The spectacle of another man of action, a *comes Orientis* turned patriarch in the person of Ephraim, and the activities of that person in the service of Chalcedonianism must have drawn his attention to what he himself could do. Moreover, the military and political situation in Oriens was favorable for action on his part. The Persian war was in full swing,⁷⁵ and he knew that Constantinople would be reluctant to alienate the commander-in-chief of the most efficient contingent of *foederati* in its service for the prosecution of the war.⁷⁶ And Justinian's record in dealing with heretical allies such as the Goths and accommodating them must have been known to Monophysite Arethas.

The question arises as to whether or not he actually came to Constantinople to approach Theodora and effect the consecrations of the bishops. John of Ephesus does not explicitly say this, but the visit to Constantinople may be implied in his narrative, as it is in Michael the Syrian. Other sources explicitly affirm it, such as the so-called spurious *Life of James* and Bar-Hebraeus.⁷⁷

⁷³ Above, 738.

⁷⁴ The non-availability of bishops in Syria was especially serious in Oriens south of the Euphrates, exactly where Arethas' phylarchate lay. The three places mentioned by John of Ephesus (PO 18, p. 519) where consecrations could be performed were Marde, Persia, and Alexandria, which thus excluded Oriens south of the Euphrates. Hence the action taken by Arethas.

⁷⁵ See R. Browning, *Justinian and Theodora* (London, 1987), 143.

⁷⁶ The very same war also created difficulties for the consecration of Monophysites in Persia, and this made even worse the already deplorable situation in Byzantine territory, where Theodosius in Constantinople was reluctant to consecrate; see Frend, *Rise*, 284.

⁷⁷ For the *Spurious Life of James*, see below, 768–71; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, I, cols. 217–19.

Modern scholars are divided on this point.⁷⁸ No definite answer can be given to this question, but the chances are that E. Stein was right when he favored the possibility of a visit to Constantinople.⁷⁹ It would have been very difficult to execute such a bold plan by correspondence with the empress. The empress was powerful and influential but so was Arethas, and the presence of both in the capital must have been deemed necessary to bring about the desired result.

Furthermore, Arethas' visit to Constantinople in 563 may serve as a parallel.⁸⁰ In that year he came to the capital in order to arrange for the succession, but he was also engaged on the side with ecclesiastical matters pertaining to the consecration of a patriarch for Antioch, Paul. Arethas would thus have come to Constantinople officially for matters pertaining to the *foederati* and the Persian war, and then would have taken advantage of his presence in the capital to attend to the question of the consecrations.

His presence in Constantinople raises the question of Justinian's attitude in this transaction. The consecrations could have been performed without his knowledge, as negotiations for the consecration of Paul took place in Constantinople itself in 563. Severus himself recommended secrecy in such delicate matters and quoted Scripture in support of his position.⁸¹ Justinian could not have been enthusiastic about it, since he worked for the unity of the faith, and so the rise of a new Monophysite hierarchy must have suggested to him that union of the two confessions would thenceforward be well-nigh impossible. On the other hand, he may have viewed the consecrations differently and have turned a blind eye to what was being done by his wife, since he himself about this time (542) dispatched a Monophysite, John of Ephesus, to do missionary work in the region of Ephesus and in Asia Minor. So the empress may have caught him in a receptive mood.

That Arethas acted not only as a Ghassānid concerned for the spiritual welfare of his *foederati* but also as a good Monophysite Christian who was concerned for the church of his doctrinal persuasion in its entirety, is evidenced by the fact that he asked Theodora not only for a bishop for his own

⁷⁸ While Nöldeke had his doubts (*GF*, 20 note 2), Stein did not rule this out and was inclined to think that he did: "peut-être vint-il lui-même à Constantinople"; *HBE*, 625 and note 1. Devreesse (*PA*, 75) and Honigmann (*Évêques*, 159) suspend judgment.

⁷⁹ Although Stein (*HBE*, 624) seems to have swallowed Procopius' calumnies against Arethas in connection with the Assyrian campaign of 541. On Procopius and Arethas, see *BASIC* I.1, 297–306.

⁸⁰ On this see *ibid.*, 282–88, and below, 782–88.

⁸¹ It could be inferred from Severus' letter to Theodosius in Alexandria that the consecration of Anthimus as patriarch of Constantinople in 535 was done in secret: "quod hoc clam factum est"; Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 106, line 30. As late as 1979, Pope John Paul II secretly created the Chinese archbishop Gong Pinmei a cardinal and announced it openly only in May 1991.

Ghassānids and the federate Arabs in general but also for a bishop who would have authority and jurisdiction over areas in the Near East other than his own.⁸² This resulted in the consecration of Jacob who, although associated with Theodore, the bishop of the Arabs, on many occasions during their long ministries, was active in areas other than those of Theodore, as is clear from the long quotation in John of Ephesus. Arethas thus emerges as one concerned for Monophysitism not only in the restricted Ghassānid area but also in the general area of the *pars orientalis*. His wider sympathies bring him into close relationship with figures in Monophysitism far removed from his phylarchal jurisdiction. However, it may be said that the extension of his federate authority by Justinian so as to include practically the whole of Oriens may have widened his confessional horizons and made them coterminous with Oriens at least; hence the keen interest he took in Monophysitism wherever it existed. This role was to be assumed later by his son Mundir, who became even more involved than his father in inter-Monophysite controversies involving Egypt.⁸³

Finally, Arethas' request for a bishop specifically assigned to the Ghassānid federates in Oriens reflects an awareness on the part of the supreme phylarch that his limitrophe in Oriens, presided over by him as supreme phylarch and king, needed, perhaps deserved, an ecclesiastic whose rank was commensurate with this extensive and powerful federate presence. The Ghassānids had been without a bishop since the exile of the Monophysite episcopate in 519. But then the Ghassānid phylarchate had been an ordinary one, and it was only around 530 that Justinian transformed it. Since then, it had grown in stature after being tested twice in the Arabian wars and in the two Persian wars of the reign. So what Justinian started in 530, politically and militarily, Arethas completed in 542/43 ecclesiastically, when he succeeded in having a special extraordinary bishop consecrated for his *foederati*. The Ghassānid phylarchate now appears complete, as its church and state are presided over by two eminent personalities, the energetic bishop and the redoubtable phylarch. The bishop of the new federate phylarchate derives some prestige from his being the bishop of the most powerful federate army in Oriens, and he in turn sheds some prestige on the Ghassānids because of his privileged position as one of the two bishops consecrated by Patriarch Theodosius in the royal city itself, and because of his association with Jacob in ecclesiastical matters. Although these consecrated many new bishops, the two remained the most prestigious in the Monophysite hierarchy of this period.

⁸² The authenticity of John of Ephesus' account that two bishops, Jacob and Theodore, were consecrated is of course beyond doubt. It is confirmed by their association in Monophysite documents which they signed together or which were addressed to them both; see below, 798–801, 807.

⁸³ See below, 896–910.

Theodore

Theodore was the other bishop who, together with Jacob, was consecrated by Theodosius in Constantinople in 542/43. But while much is known about Jacob and while ecclesiastical historians accord him much attention, Theodore is hardly noticed.⁸⁴ There are good reasons for this neglect. The chief historian of the consecration, John of Ephesus, paid much attention to Jacob, to whom he had devoted a special *Life* and then returned to him in his *Life of Jacob and Theodore*, in which, after mentioning Theodore briefly, he concentrated again on Jacob. John's special interest in Jacob is understandable. The two came from the same geographical area⁸⁵ and were Syriac-speaking, while Theodore came from Arabia and presumably was Arabic-speaking. Jacob's ministry was partly in Asia Minor, to which John of Ephesus was also assigned by Justinian. And Jacob's was the more important ministry, judging from its geographical extent, while Theodore's was much more restricted. Hence Jacob's share in the ordination of Monophysite clerics was more important for the Monophysite church than Theodore's, and this naturally attracted the attention of John of Ephesus and historians since then.

Perhaps John did not entirely neglect Theodore. As has been indicated in a previous chapter, John of Ephesus devoted an entire chapter to the history of the Ghassānid dynasty,⁸⁶ and he may have discussed the career of Theodore in that chapter, as also in the parts of his *Ecclesiastical History* that dealt with the reign of Justinian, all of which have not survived. Theodore lived to a ripe old age, since after his consecration he lived for some thirty years, dying at roughly the same time as Arethas himself around 570. He appears intermittently in Monophysite documents⁸⁷ taking part in important ecclesiastical matters, but these are sporadic. It is difficult to believe that his activities were limited to these references in the Monophysite documents in view of his long incumbency of thirty years, of his being associated with such an energetic ruler and zealous Monophysite as Arethas, and of his consecration at that crucial juncture in the history of the movement when much was expected from it, no less than the preservation and propagation of the Monophysite confession. The record of Jacob in this direction has been preserved but not that of Theodore, and the reasons have been given for this. He may not have been as energetic as Jacob, but he must have made an important contribution

⁸⁴ Honigmann is an exception; see *Évêques*, 159–64. Most of his section, however, deals with identifying his see in Gaulanitis (*ibid.*, pp. 159–63). The last two pages speak of his activities as reflected in the Monophysite documents which refer to him, but there is no attempt to say more than that.

⁸⁵ Jacob was born in Tella and John in Amida; and the latter was consecrated bishop by the former in 557.

⁸⁶ See *BASIC* I.1, 540–43, 548–49.

⁸⁷ See below, 798–801, 807.

to the spread of Monophysitism and to missionary activity in his Arab area, which may be distinguished from his contribution to other Monophysite efforts as documented in the sources in these thirty years.⁸⁸

Not much is known about Theodore's background, but he was clearly an Arab from the Provincia who apparently had been living in Constantinople as a monk, and was known for being "a strenuous man."⁸⁹ He must have been known to Arethas, who may have met him if he came to Constantinople for his investiture after being appointed *basileus* by Justinian around 530. His elevation to this important episcopate at a critical juncture suggests that he was deemed competent and worthy of the honor. His elevation to this high position recalls that of another Arab, Elias, to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem during the reign of Anastasius, and he too came from Arabia.⁹⁰ The name Theodore must have been his episcopal name which he assumed in 542/43 or had assumed when he became a monk. And it may be a translation of an Arabic name with the root W-H-B or ʿ-Ṭ-Y.⁹¹ Many Arabs assumed Graeco-Roman or Christian names which obscured their Arab identity.⁹² Had it not been for the historian's remark that he came from the Provincia, his Arab identity would not have been clear.

The most important question that surrounds the notice of Theodore in John of Ephesus is his see or the region of his authority and jurisdiction. This is clearly stated in John of Ephesus in two parts: first there is the see to which he was assigned; and then there is the geographical region over which his authority extended; both are clearly defined, and they must be distinguished from each other.

His see is referred to as "Ḥirthā d'Ṭayâyê," that is, the "castra of the Saracens."⁹³ The first to try seriously to identify this *ḥirthā*, the *castra* of the Ghassānids, was Nöldeke. He thought that Jābiya in the Gaulanitis finally became their main headquarters. As to the see of Theodore, he was first silent

⁸⁸ Jacob Baradaeus has been treated in an admirable way by D. D. Bundy in "Jacob Baradaeus: The State of Research, a Review of Sources and a New Approach," *Le Muséon* 91 (1978), 45–86. This section on Theodore will therefore serve as a complementary one to Bundy's article as it treats the other member of the pair.

⁸⁹ See Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 130, lines 20–21, where he is described as "Theodorum monachum, virum studiosum."

⁹⁰ On Elias, see *BAFIC*, 192–95, 210–11.

⁹¹ Many Arabic theophoric names have these roots. Theodore was also the name of the military saint, not inappropriate for the name of the bishop of the Ghassānid *foederati*.

⁹² John of Ephesus refers to "two pious monks . . . Benjamin and . . . Samuel." Had it not been for the fact that John mentions that they were Arabs, this could not have been inferred from their names; see *HE*, versio, p. 239, lines 18–20.

⁹³ It is a pity that the account of this consecration and references to Theodore have been lost in Zacharia's *Ecclesiastical History*. What has survived does not help much. He might have offered some important data on the Ghassānids and their bishop, as he had done on Aṣfar (Jabala) at the battle of Thannūris and on Arethas in the Armenian campaign.

on it when he briefly mentioned his consecration but later thought that the see was mobile, following the Ghassānid supreme phylarch wherever he encamped.⁹⁴ Honigmann was the only scholar who, coming after Nöldeke, tried with his usual interest in toponymy to pinpoint the exact place of this *ḥirthā*, the *castra* that became Theodore's see, and concluded that it was located in the Gaulanitis not far from Jābiya and Jasim. More precisely, he thought that Ṭūra dhe-Ḥarthā and Jasim were the sites of the Ghassānid *castra* and the administrative centers of the Ghassānid territory.⁹⁵

These toponyms mentioned by Honigmann are important Ghassānid centers, but Jābiya is the one that turned out to be the most important one as reflected in pre-Islamic poetry and the fact that it was chosen by the Muslim Arabs during the early Muslim period, both patriarchal and Umayyad, as their capital.⁹⁶ It is, therefore, correct to regard it as the Ghassānid capital or headquarters, the more or less permanent residence of the supreme phylarch, except when he would take the field. It is natural to assume that Theodore resided there.

Perhaps the term *ḥirthā* disinclined scholars to identify the *ḥirthā* of Theodore with Jābiya, which was a town. But the Ghassānid federate camps in Oriens developed into towns in much the same way that Roman *castra* developed in Britain into towns that have retained in their names traces of the word *castra*. This was the case of Jābiya, but the distinction between town and camp in it has been obliterated. Jābiya was the town of residence that dominated the region, Gaulanitis, and the region itself had camps (*castra*), more than one, where the Ghassānid troops were quartered. The *explicit* of the newly discovered letter of Simeon speaks of the bishop's writing his letter from the camp (*ḥirthā*) of Jabala, the Ghassānid king in Jābiya, so that no distinction between camp and town is made in the literary source.⁹⁷ In view of all this, Jābiya emerges as the see of Theodore, since it was the capital of the Ghassānids or their principal headquarters. But the Ghassānids were a mobile field army that would move in Oriens in obedience to military exigencies

⁹⁴ See Nöldeke, *GF*, 20, 47–49.

⁹⁵ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 161–62. He rightly observes that reference to these two toponyms comes at the beginning of the list of monasteries in Arabia, but the conclusion that he draws from this observation does not necessarily follow. Monophysite bishops in this period did not live in the cities where the Chalcedonian ones resided; they lived in villages and in monasteries, and Honigmann apparently thought that this also applied to Theodore. But the case of this bishop was different; he was protected by the military might of the Ghassānids and could easily have lived without molestation at the main headquarters that Jābiya was.

⁹⁶ It is also significant that it is Jābiya of all the Ghassānid places that the Greek sources know. It appears in Nikephorōs and Theophanes as Gabitha; see Nikephoros, *Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, ed. and trans. Cyril Mango, DOS 10 (Washington, D.C., 1990), p. 20, line 27, p. 68 and commentary, p. 187; for Jābiya see *BASIC II*.

⁹⁷ See *Martyrs*, p. xxxi, lines 20–23, and p. 63.

when their presence elsewhere was required. John of Ephesus, who wrote far from Jābiya and Ghassānland and who viewed them as a military organization, naturally used an appropriate military term, *ḥirṭhā*. His use of it was unfortunate since this misled future historians into thinking that these Ghassānids were a group of nomads who had no settled residence and that such was their bishop, Theodore.⁹⁸ But all that the description of Theodore's incumbency in John of Ephesus conveys is that he was consecrated bishop of a military group and that his natural see was their headquarters, which, as has been argued in this section, was naturally Jābiya. That he moved sometimes with the mobile Ghassānid army or elsewhere in the extensive area of his authority should not obscure the fact that his see was at some Ghassānid settlement such as Jābiya,⁹⁹ and that he was primarily the bishop not of nomads¹⁰⁰ but of the sedentary Ghassānids, who were part of the field army of Oriens and thus mobile for purely military necessities connected with their being functionally, if not technically, a contingent in the Byzantine *exercitus comitatensis*.

It is even more important to determine the territorial extent of Theodore's bishopric than the name of his see, and again it is best to quote John of Ephesus: ". . . the blessed Theodore exercised authority in the southern and western countries, and the whole of the desert and Arabia and Palestine, as far as Jerusalem." Thus the territorial jurisdiction of Theodore was clearly extensive and, for the sake of discussion, may be divided into what is precise and defined and what is not.

1. In the first category are Arabia and Palestine as far as Jerusalem. The reference to Arabia is clearly not to the Peninsula but to the Provincia, the power base of the Ghassānid phylarchs, and the province of the chief phylarch, Arethas himself, when he extended his authority over the Arab federates throughout Oriens. This is consonant with what has been said about Theodore's see, that it was also where Arethas was stationed in the Gaulanitis, although this technically belonged to Palaestina Secunda. So, although Theodore had extensive and far-reaching jurisdiction, his most immediate concern was the Provincia Arabia, the seat of Arethas who was responsible for his

⁹⁸ When Nöldeke wrote (*GF*, 47–48), the term *ḥirṭhā*, both the noun and the verb from which it is derived, had not been discovered in the Sabaic inscriptions. These have since then revealed *ḥirṭhā* to mean "camp" and not an enclosure for cattle such as used by nomads. Thus the word cannot argue for the nomadism of the Ghassānids, any more than *castra* can for that of the regular Roman soldiers; on *ḥirṭhā*, see *BAFOC*, 490–98.

⁹⁹ Evaria (Ḥuwwārīn) also comes to mind. As has been said in a previous chapter, it was the seat of a bishop of the Arabs, John, who was among the exiles of 519. It has been suggested that he could have been the bishop of the Ghassānids. But that was more than twenty years ago, and since then circumstances had changed.

¹⁰⁰ As will be indicated presently, Theodore's assignment was probably related to missionary work among the Saracens of western Arabia and outside the *limes* in northern Arabia, which had its nomads.

consecration. Thus the Provincia now had the two most important functionaries, the supreme phylarch and his distinguished bishop.

The reference to Palestine is more complex since there were three Palestines and Jerusalem was in Dyophysite Palaestina Prima. Two of the three Palestines had a Ghassānid presence. Arethas was in charge of the federate troops in Palaestina Secunda, and his brother Abū Karib was in Palaestina Tertia, which comprised Sinai, the Negev, and a part of Trans-Jordania extending into northern Ḥijāz. So Theodore was still in Ghassānid territory and moved in this vast area comprising Arabia and the two Palestines, Secunda and Tertia. The Ghassānid bishopric was coterminous at least with the jurisdiction of the two Ghassānid brothers, an extraordinary bishopric comparable to the extraordinary phylarchate of Arethas.

Theodore remained associated with Arethas in Monophysite ecclesiastical matters until his death, and the phylarch's connection with Monophysitism is well documented. Not so that of his brother Abū Karib, who first appears in Procopius without his Ghassānid affiliation; it was not until E. Glaser's discovery of the Sabaic Dam inscription of Abraha around 1900 that it became known that he was a Ghassānid and the brother of Arethas. Not much else is known about him. Now with the bishopric of Theodore extending to his province, it may be fairly assumed that bishop and phylarch worked hand in hand in the propagation of Christianity in those regions.¹⁰¹ The Syriac manuscript discovered at Nabk now becomes more intelligible.¹⁰² It contains an invocation to the believing king Abū Karib, and it is dated to the time of the two bishops, Jacob and Theodore. Theodore became a well-known bishop in Palaestina Tertia where Abū Karib was phylarch; he must have been involved in the affairs of the Christian faith there and elsewhere. And the reference to Theodore and to Abū Karib in one and the same manuscript clearly indicates that Abū Karib, about whom nothing else was heard since reference to him in Procopius around 530, was still alive at least as late as 542/43.

Theodore's "jurisdiction" extended "as far as Jerusalem," which was in Palaestina Prima, not Ghassānid territory. Furthermore, it was solidly Dyophysite; hence the reference to it calls for an explanation.

Jerusalem, of course, was the Holy City of Christians whatever their denomination, and the Monophysites had struggled hard in the days of Severus to win it for their confession. Severus himself spent a long time as a monk in the Holy Land. So it was not unusual to find in the sources that the

¹⁰¹ For all that pertains to Abū Karib, see *BASIC* I.1, 124–31 and below, 845–49.

¹⁰² First noted and commented on by Nöldeke, *GF*, 26–27. Nöldeke could not identify the Abū Karib mentioned in the manuscript because he wrote before the discovery of the Sabaic Dam inscription, which has made certain that the Abū Karib of the manuscript could only have been the same as the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia and the brother of Arethas; see above, 764 note 98.

Monophysites desired to have a presence there. They must have been encouraged by the fact that the defense of the Holy Land against the pastoralists from the north, south, and east was partly in the hands of the two Ghassānid brothers. So probably the reference to Jerusalem belonged to wishful thinking or nostalgia on the part of the Monophysites, but Theodore may well have done some missionary work west of the Jordan in Palaestina Prima, which could be reflected in the following.

Cyril of Scythopolis records a quarrel between two phylarchs in the region, Arethas the Ghassānid and al-Aswad. The passage was noted by Nöldeke who rightly concluded that a phylarch by the name of Arethas fighting in Palestine in this period could only have been the Ghassānid, while al-Aswad probably was a Kindite.¹⁰³ It is difficult to guess what the bone of contention was. With possible missionary activity on behalf of Monophysitism, there may have been opposition on the part of the non-Monophysite phylarch al-Aswad and Arethas may have been involved in an effort to support the work of his bishop Theodore.¹⁰⁴

Palestinian toponymy presents two names that suggest a Ghassānid presence in this non-Ghassānid territory: Dayr ʿAmr and Dayr Ghassāneh. The latter is a resoundingly Ghassānid name, while the former could very well be, since ʿAmr is a hallowed Ghassānid name, going back to the famous ancestor ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir. Although the former may turn out to be non-Ghassānid, the latter is difficult to explain except by assuming that it represented an effort of the Ghassānids to gain a foothold in the Holy Land. Perhaps this happened during the episcopate of Theodore, who himself had been a monk before his elevation and consecration as bishop.¹⁰⁵

2. The other part of Theodore's jurisdiction, the description of which is couched in general and sometimes vague terms in John of Ephesus, speaks of "the southern and western countries and the whole of the desert." These are very general terms in contrast with the specificity that attends Arabia and Palestine, and the problem is what to understand by them.

Although the jurisdiction of Theodore is being treated here separately from that of Jacob, the two were consecrated together and remained active together. The presumption is that when the territorial divisions were decided in Constantinople by Theodosius and Arethas for the mission of the two Monophysite bishops, their spheres of activity were delimited but remained related. Hence by contrast with Jacob's sphere, that of Theodore becomes clearer.

¹⁰³ See *GF*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ Further on this, see *BASIC* I.1, 251–54. It is noteworthy that the quarrel took place in the 540s, that is, after Theodore was consecrated as bishop; thus, on chronological grounds, it is possible to assign a confessional base for the strife between the two phylarchs.

¹⁰⁵ On the two *dayrs* (monasteries), see *ibid.*, 654–55 and *BAFIC*, 255.

Jacob's see was Edessa, although he never dared to reside there. He was responsible for the region that comprised Mesopotamia, eastern Anatolia, and Egypt (he was active in Alexandria). That leaves, for Theodore, Oriens west of the Euphrates but excluding Syria, which John of Ephesus includes in Jacob's jurisdiction;¹⁰⁶ and by Syria must be understood the little province in the north near the Euphrates, not the whole of the region to the south, since Arabia and Palestine are specifically mentioned as pertaining to Theodore's jurisdiction.¹⁰⁷ Within this framework, it is possible to arrive at what "the southern and western countries" of the region mean.

The "southern countries" are clearly in relation to Syria and the region of Edessa in the north over which Jacob presided, and this is true geographically. The term "southern" could mean just that, but the language of John suggests that not those two provinces or not only those are meant, since the Syriac conjunction *w* ("and") is clearly used, which proves that the two provinces are not in apposition to the southern and western countries. So it is possible to conclude that it included regions south of Arabia and Palestine, that is, Ḥijāz and western Arabia in general which is indeed to the south, and that is so in biblical usage, including the description of the Queen of Sheba as "the Queen of the South."¹⁰⁸ As to the term "western," it clearly reflects the directional or geographical view of the world of the two rivers to which John of Ephesus belonged,¹⁰⁹ and it refers to the area west of the Euphrates, although in regular Byzantine administrative terminology it was called Oriens, that is, from the viewpoint of the Roman Occident. That of course includes the provinces of Arabia and Palestine, and also may include western Arabia itself, even more westerly from the Mesopotamian point of view than these two provinces.

There remains the term "desert," *madbrā* in the Syriac original, which in this context as part of the jurisdiction of Theodore, the bishop of the Saracens, can only mean some Arab or Arabian desert. This could easily refer to the limitrophe from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Aqaba or even the region to its east where lived tribes who belonged to the Outer Shield of Byzantium,¹¹⁰ such as Kalb, Judām, and others.

¹⁰⁶ The inclusion of Syria in the description of the statement on the jurisdiction of Jacob in John of Ephesus may sound surprising in view of the fact that it was so close to Theodore's and that of the Ghassānids. But Syria here should be understood in the restricted sense as the province, not the whole region, and it was there that the see of the Patriarchate of Antioch was located. Jacob was the more important of the two bishops, and this, together with the fact that the region was principally Syriac-, not Arabic-speaking, could account for the assignment of Syria to Jacob.

¹⁰⁷ Perhaps Phoenicia Libanensis with its strong Arab ethnic makeup was left for Theodore. Evaria, the see of John, the bishop of the Saracens, who was exiled in 519, was located in that province.

¹⁰⁸ See Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31.

¹⁰⁹ As noted also by E. W. Brooks, PO 19, p. 154 note 2.

¹¹⁰ On this term, see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

Therefore, in addition to his assignment to the two provinces within the *limes*, Theodore apparently was assigned to areas outside it in the adjacent territories in northern Arabia and in Ḥijāz. Thus Theodore emerges from this analysis as the bishop of the Arabs in Oriens and in the neighboring Arab region for almost one-third of the sixth century.

The Spurious Life of James

Arethas' involvement in the consecration of the two bishops and other related matters are described in a third document attributed to John of Ephesus called *The Spurious Life of James*. This has been under a cloud for more than a century since H. G. Kleyen declared it pseudonymous. Others have concurred with this judgment, and E. W. Brooks thought it was a later work, composed for the greater glory of the monastery of Phesiltha to which Jacob had belonged before his ordination.¹¹¹ Much could be said for this view. Although conclusions on Arethas and Theodore in this volume rest on the two authentic *Lives* just analyzed, some attention should be paid to this *Life* for the sake of completing the investigation of all documents pertaining to Arethas and Theodore.

Nöldeke thought the *Life* ultimately went back to John of Ephesus but that a later enthusiast had enlarged it.¹¹² This does not necessarily mean that the enlargement is entirely unhistorical. The problem of attribution has to be separated from authenticity and the genuineness of data in the *Life*. It is noteworthy that the two authentic *Lives* of Jacob are rather short and concentrate on the question of his consecration and his activities after 542/43. But Jacob died a very old man, and so this *Life* seems to attempt to offer a comprehensive account of his life not restricted to the question of his consecration, the main concern of the two others. The Arab elements in the *Life* are three and may be presented as follows.

1. There is first the visit of Arethas to Constantinople for invoking the aid of Theodora in 542/43. While this is not explicitly stated in the two *Lives* and can only be implied, in this *Life* it is stated very clearly.¹¹³ As has been argued in this chapter, this was most probably true, and so this does not affect the authenticity of the *Life* and may enhance it, in that it amplifies what the other two *Lives* briefly tell.

2. Then comes the question of Theodore and his see of Bostra. The *Life* describes him as "well-trying" (Syriac *baḥīrā*) and gives his see as Bostra.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ For the *Life*, see PO 19, pp. 228–68; for views on its composition, see E. W. Brooks, PO 17, p. xiii and Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus," 72.

¹¹² See Nöldeke, *GF*, 20 note 2.

¹¹³ See PO 19, p. 238.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

This, too, should not be considered a monstrosity in true reporting. Jacob never resided in his see of Edessa, and this has not been a ground for rejecting the statement that he was appointed its bishop.¹¹⁵ He was its titular bishop for the Monophysite church, just as there was a Chalcedonian residing in Edessa as its legitimate bishop. The same applies to Theodore. The most important episcopal see in his jurisdiction was indeed Bostra, and it is quite possible, even probable, that when the division of the Monophysite world was made for him and Jacob, those who were responsible for this division in Constantinople thought of Theodore as the Monophysite bishop of Bostra, although they did not expect him to reside there. It is not altogether impossible that with the growth of Arethas' prestige during the thirty years or so after the consecration of Theodore, his bishop may have had some association with Bostra, with which city the Ghassānids had close connections. The Monophysites were soon to have a patriarch consecrated for Antioch itself, in the late 550s, Sergius; and in the early 560s, Arethas himself would intervene for the appointment of Paul to the Patriarchate of Antioch, although neither of them resided in that city. Also, it should be remembered in this connection that the Julianist faction of the Monophysites did appoint a bishop of their own for Bostra¹¹⁶ (also titular), and this suggests that it was in answer to an appointment already made by their opponents, the Severan Monophysites.

3. Finally, there is that account which tells of the encounter of Arethas with Jacob while the latter was a monk at the monastery of Phesiltha. The phylarch crosses the Euphrates to invoke the aid of the saint for curing his troops who were seized with insanity. The saint who appears as miracleworker asks him to free a certain holy man, a monk from Sinai detained in his camp, which act will cure his troops. Arethas returns to his camp and, finding his troops already cured, sets the monk free and kills his captor.¹¹⁷

The account, like all accounts of this description, is equally difficult to accept or reject. One can only make the following observations on the narrative. Arethas entertained a profound respect for, and loyalty to, Jacob throughout the latter's long ministry. So he must have had some close contact with him, and it is possible that this goes back to this early period, although not necessarily as the *Life* tells it. The embellishments and the miraculous elements added to it do not entirely rule out a contact between the two, which made a deep impression on Arethas.

¹¹⁵ For his designation as ecumenical metropolitan as in Bar-Hebraeus, see Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus," 79.

¹¹⁶ See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 160 note 6. Honigmann entertained the account of the episcopate of Theodore over Bostra and thought he might have been in fact officially designated as the bishop or metropolitan of Bostra by the Monophysites, although he did not reside there; *ibid.*, p. 160.

¹¹⁷ See PO 19, pp. 233–34.

The reported involvement with saints and holy men is not out of character for Arethas. As already noted, he appears as a respectable "theologian" in his encounter with Ephraim, and not only as a rude soldier. He repeats this performance when he presides over a church council that condemned Eugenius and Conon. He appears as a genuinely pious soldier when he writes his letter from Constantinople in 563 in connection with the consecration of Paul to the see of Antioch.¹¹⁸ Soldiers are sometimes susceptible to the influence of holy men, and Arethas' encounter with Jacob as a miracleworker has a close parallel in his career to the miracle performed by St. Simeon the Younger, when he prophesied for him and his troops their victory over his adversary Mundir in 554.¹¹⁹ So in the episode with Jacob, the details sound strange, but all that can be said is that one cannot rule out an encounter between the two in which some miraculous element was involved.¹²⁰

Finally, the reference to the holy man from Sinai must have disinclined scholars from giving credence to the account, since Sinai must have seemed so very far from the jurisdiction of Arethas in the Provincia Arabia. This reference to Sinai was thus deemed unhistorical, just as the suspicion of the miraculous element in the *Life* must have seemed justified when Kleyn wrote in 1882 and influenced others who came after him. But around 1900, Glaser discovered the Sabaic Dam inscription of Abraha,¹²¹ which revealed that Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, was none other than the brother of Arethas, and this Ghassānid influence did extend to Sinai since it was part of Palaestina Tertia. Consequently the presence of a monk from faraway Sinai in

¹¹⁸ For these two interventions of Arethas in Monophysite affairs, see below, 782–88.

¹¹⁹ See *BASIC* I.1, 244–49.

¹²⁰ It is possible that the troops of Arethas were seized not by insanity but by the famous plague of the early 540s, and this may be supported by the fact that the two were related. In the account of Procopius, one of the symptoms of the plague was a violent delirium or hallucination: "But those who were seized with delirium suffered from insomnia and were victims of a distorted imagination; for they suspected that men were coming upon them to destroy them, and they would become excited and rush off in flight, crying out at the top of their voices"; *History* II.xxii.20–21. The plague of madness is even better described in the Syriac sources beginning with John of Ephesus, who remembered it vividly when it hit Amida in 542; see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis* (Berkeley, 1990), 63–64 and 171 note 44 for the accounts of the plague in the Syriac sources. So even this part of the *Life*, which must have sounded incredible before, may, after all, be an authentic record of what befell the Ghassānid army during the plague. The first year of the plague is sometimes thought to be 541 (see *ODB*, III, s.v. plague), when Jacob was still a monk; two years later he was consecrated as bishop in Constantinople. So chronologically it is possible for Arethas to have met him in 541 while he was still a monk. But difficulties do persist; according to John of Ephesus, Jacob was then a monk in Constantinople, not in Phesiltha, and had been such for fifteen years before his consecration. But this, too, is suspect, as E. W. Brooks suggests (*PO* 18, p. 691 note 1), since the conferences with the Chalcedonians for which Jacob came to Constantinople took place in the mid 530s. If so, Arethas may have met Jacob at Phesiltha in the early 530s and the plague may have been merely a local one, or his troops may have suffered from some other malady.

¹²¹ On the Dam inscription, see *BASIC* II.

the Ghassānid camp of Arethas does not seem so incredible. Again, this is not to say that there actually was a monk from Sinai in Arethas' camp; it only speaks for the possibility of it, consonant with what is known about the extent of the Ghassānid presence in Oriens.¹²²

IV. THE TRIO: ARETHAS, JACOB, AND THEODORE

Theodore emerges as a major figure in the history of Monophysitism in the sixth century and the foremost figure in Arab Christianity as he ministers for three decades in the service of the new Arab church. But it is misleading to treat him in isolation from the career of Jacob. So before marking the significance of Theodore in the history of the Arab church, it is necessary to discuss the two bishops together and also in relation to Arethas. For thirty years Jacob and Theodore were inseparably linked to each other, and this is established not from statements of later historians but from contemporary documents,¹²³ those precious letters written to them and by them, concerning important problems that the Monophysite church faced in the sixth century.

The two prelates were united theologically, as is clear from these letters. But both of them were consecrated primarily in order that they in turn would revive the decimated Monophysite hierarchy through further ordinations. Canonicity of episcopal consecration had troubled Severus and Theodosius before 535 and before 542/43, but after that date the Monophysites had two bishops consecrated canonically by Patriarch Theodosius in Constantinople. It is not clear whether or not Theodore helped Jacob in consecrating other bishops, in the laying on of hands (*cheirotomia*).¹²⁴

Closely connected with the relationship of the two prelates to each other is the relationship of Arethas to both of them. Arethas appears strongly behind not only his charge, Theodore, but also Jacob whom he supported, as will be seen, staunchly and loyally for the rest of his life until the very year of his death in 569. In his final denunciation of the Tritheistic Eugenius and Conon, Arethas, who presided over the church council that condemned these two, singles out Jacob for special mention as the exponent of orthodox Monophysite theology.¹²⁵

This raises the question of the basis for this loyalty and support. The

¹²² Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1206) summarized the account in the *Spurious Life* on the encounter between Arethas and Jacob but erroneously thought that it attributed Arethas' conversion to Monophysitism to this encounter.

¹²³ See below, 788-92, 798-801, 806-8.

¹²⁴ In his *Life of James and Theodore*, John of Ephesus speaks in detail of the ordinations performed by Jacob in various parts, but he does not mention the name of Theodore in this connection. Instead he speaks of saintly men whom Jacob met in Alexandria, and then he continues to use verbs in the plural for indicating the process of ordination without saying who they were that performed the ordinations; see PO 19, pp. 155-58.

¹²⁵ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 256.

Arab phylarch, as has been said, was not a mere soldier but a pious Christian and a zealous Monophysite. Support for the two bishops was a natural sequel to his efforts toward their consecration. Furthermore, the friendship and close association of the two, his own bishop Theodore and Jacob, must also have influenced Arethas. It is not altogether unlikely that Arethas was attracted to Jacob by certain qualities that they had in common: great physical strength, powers of endurance, and a ubiquitous presence in the *pars orientalis* performing their duties seriously. He probably saw in him his counterpart in the Monophysite *ecclesia*.¹²⁶

Some important consequences follow from this attachment of Arethas to Jacob. The phylarch appears as much a Christian as an Arab, perhaps more the former than the latter in his support of Jacob, and, even more important, he appears not as a soldier possessed of separatist tendencies from the *imperium* but as one that was loyal to it, identifying himself with the interests of its *ecclesia*. The Arab component in his makeup recedes almost completely into the background when the phylarch is called upon to attend to the problem of the Monophysite church.¹²⁷

The sources are informative on the activities of Jacob throughout his career until his death in 578. But with the exception of the Monophysite documents, the letters referred to previously, in which Jacob and Theodore are associated, the sources are silent on the fortunes of Theodore. As noted earlier, there were reasons for this silence, the fact that what was written about him is not extant, mainly due to the accidents of survival that involved the work of his historian, John of Ephesus. One can therefore only grope in the dark to mark the significance of this major figure who endured as such for some thirty years.

First and foremost comes the question of his relationship to Arabic, especially as Theodore's knowledge of that language, although clearly implied, is not explicitly stated. The description of Jacob's jurisdiction clearly indicates that to him was assigned the non-Arab area of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the islands, the areas of Syriac and Greek.¹²⁸ He is further described as conversant with the Syriac and Greek languages, not Arabic,¹²⁹ and this statement is related to the extent of his jurisdiction, the non-Arabic-speaking area in the East. On the other hand, the description of Theodore's jurisdiction, the Arab area, and the datum that he hailed from Arabia suggest that the Arabic-speaking area was assigned to him, not to Jacob, because the latter did not

¹²⁶ If the encounter with Jacob, related in the *Spurious Life*, above, 769, has any element of fact in it, this would be another basis for the loyalty of Arethas to Jacob.

¹²⁷ See below, 782-88, 804-5, 808-24.

¹²⁸ See PO 18, p. 695, in the *Life of James*.

¹²⁹ Spelled out in the *Spurious Life*, PO 19, p. 237.

speak Arabic, while the former did. This is clear from the career of one who was almost a contemporary of Theodore, who was actually consecrated bishop by Jacob, Aḥūdemmeh, whose ministry was in Persian Mesopotamia and who served the Arabs of the region. He could not communicate with the Arabs before their conversion because of their "difficult language."¹³⁰

Although the sources are silent on the achievement of Theodore within the *limes*, in the two provinces of Arabia and Palestine, some inferences may be drawn on what he must have achieved in that area from the fact that he was ordained especially to do just that. In the fifth century Sozomen speaks of the many bishops that the inhabitants of the Provincia Arabia had, and the presumption is that Theodore continued that tradition in the consecration of bishops in that province and in Palestine.¹³¹ What a Monophysite Arab church complete with all the ranks of the hierarchy must have looked like may be conceived from the parallel of the Monophysite Arab church of Najrān in the 520s, which had its bishop, presbyters, archdeacons, deacons, and subdeacons, an account of which has survived.¹³² Theodore would also have attended to the problem of organizing monastic life in the two provinces, especially as he himself had been a monk before he became a bishop. If records for an Arab church and its hierarchy in the Provincia Arabia have not been preserved, a record of the monastic life in that province has, in the form of the many signatures of the monks of the Provincia which appear in a letter they wrote supporting the position of Jacob and Theodore on the Tritheistic movement. Many of these monks must have been Arab, and some have recognizable Arab names.¹³³

Without the *limes*, his work is even less known and can only be a matter of inference. The description of his appointment included the desert, the *mad-brā*, and the southern and western regions, which have been identified with the oriental limitrophe and Ḥijāz in western Arabia. Christianity had already spread in those regions, as has been explained in the volumes on the fourth and fifth centuries, and Theodore must have built on that foundation.¹³⁴ But

¹³⁰ Michael the Syrian mentions that Arethas spoke Arabic to his followers (above, 752–53), the only reference in the Syriac sources to Arabic spoken among the Ghassānid *foederati*. In view of this, it should be mentioned here in connection with the problem of Arabic among the *foederati*. On Aḥūdemmeh and his ministry for the Arabs of Mesopotamia, see *BAFOC*, 419–22, especially 420 note 13.

¹³¹ See *BAFIC*, 178–79.

¹³² See *Martyrs*, 64.

¹³³ On these signatures, see below, 824–38. On the missionary activity of Theodore among the Arabs, the parallel of Moses, Mavia's bishop in the 4th century, is relevant. The Arab queen Mavia insisted on an Arab bishop for her *foederati*, and she received one, Moses, who, like Theodore, had been a monk, even an anchorite. Sozomen specifically says that he engaged in missionary activity among the Saracens; see *BAFOC*, 156.

¹³⁴ For Christianity in western Arabia in these centuries, see *BAFOC*, 86–106, and *BAFIC*, 332–60.

this, too, poses the question of determining which Christian traces, if any, are Theodore's and which are not.¹³⁵ South Arabia was already won to Monophysitism, and so by elimination Hijāz would have been the region for the spread of the Christian faith in this period.

The Ghassānid phylarchate, which acquired a new identity around 530 when Justinian conferred on Arethas the extraordinary *Basileia*, acquired another dimension for this new identity when Theodosius, the Monophysite patriarch in Constantinople, ordained Theodore as the bishop of Ghassānland and the Arabs. Thus around 542/43 it became a diminutive Byzantium, composed of an *imperium* and an *ecclesia*. Ghassānland had now two supreme heads, Arethas at the head of its *imperium* and Theodore at the head of its *sacerdotium*. This gave the Ghassānid phylarchate a new prestige, especially as Theodore was associated in the consciousness of Monophysites with Jacob, and Arethas appeared as the military arm protecting the movement and also presiding over church councils. This prestige was now spread over all the Monophysite Near East. Arethas took his place alongside Near Eastern rulers such as Monophysite Abraha of South Arabia and Ella-Aṣbeḥa of Ethiopia, all contemporaries who belonged to the same confessional fold. Thus a strong, organized Arab Monophysite church was born in this period. But while the Syrian one organized by Jacob has survived to the present day, that organized by Theodore has not. Its Arabs, whether Ghassānids, Kalbites, or Juḏāmites of the Outer Shield, either emigrated to Byzantine Anatolia after Yarmūk or finally adopted Islam.

V. THE LAST DECADE, 543–553

The sources for the ten years or so that elapsed from the consecration of Jacob and Theodore to the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 are arid as far as Arab ecclesiastical history is concerned, especially when compared with the preceding period and with the 560s when the Ghassānids and Arethas at their head appear again on important occasions in the history of the Monophysite movement. Not that Theodore was inactive; he was probably as active as Jacob, but the sources for the period are naturally concerned with other events, such as the edict on the Three Chapters, the *Judicatum* of Pope Vigilius in 548, and finally the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553. One can, therefore, only note certain events that took place in the sphere of activity of Theodore and Arethas, in Oriens, which are of relevance to Arab ecclesiastical history.

In 545 died Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, who was the determined enemy of the Monophysites in Oriens, roughly his patriarchate, and with whom Arethas had that encounter in the late 530s. The Monophysites and the

¹³⁵ On this, more will be said in *BASIC II*.

Ghassānids must have viewed his death with some relief, since according to Monophysite historians he was the spirit behind the persecution at that time.

More important is the death of the empress in 548. The services of Theodora to the Monophysite cause need no underlining, and her relations with the Ghassānids and their king, Arethas, have been discussed. Fortunately she died after she had secured the fateful consecration of the two bishops in 542/43 and after she had established some influence for the phylarch in the capital. Most important is the fact that Justinian's devotion to her, which was an important factor in the gains and victories scored by the Monophysites, continued after her death and with it continued her posthumous influence that served the Monophysite cause. The Ghassānid Arethas could count on her green memory till the end of the reign, some twenty years after her death.

In the 540s and after the end of the second Persian war, Arethas conducted a private war with his pagan Lakhmid adversary, Munḍir, and the war had some religious overtones. In one of the encounters, Munḍir captured one of the sons of Arethas and sacrificed him to al-'Uzzā, the Arabian Aphrodite. When Arethas won his final victory over Munḍir in 554, one of his sons was killed in battle, and he buried him in a *martyrion* in Chalcis.¹³⁶ These actions both speak for themselves. Arethas was a zealous Monophysite and conducted his Lakhmid war along religious lines; he went to war as a Christian soldier.

From 548, the year of the *Judicatum*, circumstances were pointing to the necessity of convening an ecumenical council, which finally took place in 553. Unlike previous councils, this one did not deal with a new heresy but confirmed previous decrees, as it condemned the works of the three theologians mentioned in the edict on the Three Chapters and anathematized their persons. It was a friendly gesture aimed at the Monophysites, whom the emperor was trying to reconcile. Arethas and his Monophysite Ghassānid *foederati* were thus more than tolerated by an emperor who was increasingly veering toward the christological position of the Monophysites, to whom belonged his recently deceased wife.

VI. APPENDIX

Sergius, Bishop of Ḥirta

The anti-Julianist Syriac documents published, translated, and studied by R. Draguet give an account of the consecrations performed by Julianist bishops in the sixth century. One document speaks of the consecration of four bishops by Eutropius, one of whom was "Sergius de Ḥirta."¹ This particular bishop was mentioned as such without

¹³⁶ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 243.

¹ R. Draguet, "Pièces de polémique antijulianiste," *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), 84 note 1. According to Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 263, these consecrations took place shortly after 549.

any further qualification, and this has created some confusion as to where this Ḥirta to which he was assigned is located.

Draguet located it in South Arabia, in spite of the fact that there is no such toponym in that region. In so doing, he drew on the much more expansive account of Michael the Syrian, which misled him, although Michael's account is clear: "L'un d'eux descendit à Ḥirta de Beit Na^ʿmān, et dans le pays des Himyarites. Il s'appelait Sergius."² Apparently Draguet missed the conjunction *et* after *Na^ʿmān* in Michael's account and so concluded that Ḥirta is in the land of the Ḥimyarites—South Arabia.

Draguet, however, was on the right track when he invoked the aid of Michael's *Chronicle* in trying to comment on the see assigned to Sergius, and indeed his account is valuable for this and other reasons, namely, the journey of Sergius later to the Ḥimyarites, of South Arabia, a matter of considerable importance to the religious complexion of South Arabia in the sixth century and its effects on the neighboring region. Although he was wrong in assigning Ḥirta to South Arabia, he was right in identifying it with the Ḥirta de Beit Na^ʿmān, the Ḥirta of the house of Na^ʿmān.

M. Sartre accepted Draguet's identification of Ḥirta of the anti-Julianist document with the Ḥirta de Beit Na^ʿmān of Michael the Syrian but noted Draguet's mistake in locating it in South Arabia.³ For his part, he located it in the Jawlān, Gaulanitis in Palaestina Secunda, but there is no such toponym in that region. This identification was possibly made because of the existence of similarly sounding toponyms in that region such as Tell al-Ḥāra, Jabal/Ḥārith, or Ḥārith al-Jawlān, all Ghassānid toponyms.

The Ḥirta mentioned in this Syriac document as the see of Sergius can only have been the Ḥīra of the Lakhmids, in Iraq, away from Byzantine territory, and their capital. The term, originally a common Arabic noun, *ḥīra*, transliterated into Syriac as *ḥirta*, meant simply "camp," and is often applied to the mobile camps of the Ghassānids. The term was promoted into a proper noun when it acquired denominative status, applied to the capital of the Lakhmid Arabs in Iraq. When it is used without any qualification, as in the Syriac document, and as a proper noun, it means Ḥīra of the Lakhmids and only that.⁴

Michael the Syrian prefaces his statement on Sergius and Ḥirta by saying that Eutropius sent those he consecrated in all directions in order to spread the Julianist version of Monophysitism. Thus he did not limit their dispatch to Byzantium or to Byzantine territory in Oriens. This is consonant with the location of Ḥīra outside Byzantine territory, as well as with Ḥimyar.

Michael leaves no doubt whatsoever that it is the capital of the Lakhmids when he adds a qualification to Ḥirta, that it is "de Beit Na^ʿmān." This cannot be a reference to the Ghassānids who are invariably referred to as the house of Ḥārith or Mundir. But Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids in Iraq, is referred to exactly by that description after the two famous kings of the fifth century, each of whom was called Nu^ʿmān/Na^ʿmān. And this is confirmed by the Syriac sources of the sixth century,

² *Chronique*, II, 264.

³ For Sartre's views, see *Bostra* (Paris, 1985), 112.

⁴ On *ḥīra*/Ḥīra, see *BAFOC*, 490–98.

which refer to it as Ḥirta d'Bēth Na'mān. Such is the valuable reference to it in the *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*.⁵

So when Eutropius consecrated the Julianist bishops, he sent one of them to Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids in Iraq, to spread the good word. This is consonant with the efforts of the Monophysites to convert Ḥīra and approach its rulers; Julianist Monophysites thus were in the footsteps of their Severan rivals in targeting Ḥīra.⁶

The discussion of the episcopate of this Sergius has led to another misunderstanding which should be cleared up, also generated by the account of Michael. When speaking of the activities of Sergius, he says that he introduced many doctrinal errors into the countries he preached in, and after spending three years in Ḥimyar, he established in his place another bishop, Moses. The French version of Michael reads as follows: "et après avoir passé trois ans dans le pays des Himyarites, il établit à sa place comme évêque un certain Moïse."⁷

Sartre⁸ understood the passage to mean that before he departed for Ḥimyar, Sergius consecrated Moses as bishop in Ḥirta, which to him was in Ghassānid Gaulanitis. My reading of the text in Michael yields a different conclusion: that the consecration of Moses took place not in Ḥirta but in Ḥimyar after Sergius spent three years there. According to Sartre's interpretation of the anti-Julianist text and Michael's *Chronicle*, the Ghassānids in Gaulanitis had two bishops in this period, one called Sergius and another called Moses. But a close examination of the two texts has shown that neither of the two bishops was assigned to the Jawlān of the Ghassānids who, moreover, were Severan Monophysites and would not have allowed two dissident bishops of the Julianist persuasion to operate in their region. The two bishops associated with Arabia whom Eutropius consecrated were Theodosius and after him Stephen,⁹ but these could not have been associated with the Ghassānids who belonged to a different Monophysite persuasion, the Severan.¹⁰

C

The Third Phase (553–565)

I. INTRODUCTION

In the third and last phase, Arethas maintained the momentum he had acquired when he succeeded in securing the consecration of Jacob and Theodore in the previous phase, and continued to serve the Monophysite church until

⁵ See *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, ed. and trans. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), 54. For the English translation of this passage where Ḥirta of Na'mān occurs, see *ibid.*, 45–46. See also the treatment of this passage by the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New terminus a quo," *Der Islam* 33 (1958), 242–47.

⁶ On this see above, 702–9.

⁷ *Chronique*, II, 264.

⁸ See *Bostra*, 112.

⁹ See Draguet, "Pièces," 84.

¹⁰ The relevance of this Julianist effort in the Provincia to Arab cultural history will be discussed in *BASIC II*.

the death of Justinian and the very last year of his own reign in 569. But before discussing his contributions, it is well that a brief account of imperial ecclesiastical policy be given which will serve as a background against which may be set the activity of the Ghassānid phylarch.

The year 553 has been truly described as an *annus mirabilis* for Justinian.¹ His armies were victorious in Italy where they won the smashing victory of Busta Gallorum, and he acquired one-third of Visigothic Spain. In addition to military victories in the West, he convened the Fifth Ecumenical Council, in which his imperial theology triumphed, and he succeeded in forcing Pope Vigilius to submit to the decrees of the council. As far as the Monophysite profile of the council is concerned, it confirmed Justinian's previous edict on the Three Chapters and reflected his continuing interest in reconciling the Monophysites of the Orient. Toward the end of the reign, this imperial attitude was enhanced when the emperor moved closer to the Monophysite position by adopting the theology of Julian of Halicarnassus, Aphthartodocetism, condemned by Severan Monophysitism. He apparently believed in it sincerely and vehemently and was preparing to take disciplinary action against the Chalcedonian patriarchs, one of whom, Eutychius of Constantinople, he had arrested, in January 565, and banished, when death overtook him shortly after.² Although Justinian's ecclesiastical policy failed to unite the East and brought about schism in the West, from the point of view of Monophysitism, it was a tolerant policy that enabled zealous Monophysites, such as Arethas the Ghassānid, to remain unmolested and even accelerate the pace of their services to that cause. His activities may be divided chronologically into two phases, the 550s and the 560s.

II. THE FIFTIES

This period in the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids extends roughly from 553, the year of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, to the end of the decade. The little that has survived of its history in the sources may be presented as follows.

1. If 553 was an *annus mirabilis* for Justinian, the year 554 was also such for Arethas.³ In June of that year he scored the victory of his life and reign over his and Byzantium's inveterate enemy for some fifty years, Muṇḍir, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, who died in a battle fought in the vicinity of Chalcis/Qinnasrīn. The religious undertones of the battle are relevant in this context, and they reveal Arethas and his Ghassānids as Christian soldiers fighting their wars as such. Before the battle, St. Simeon the Younger prophesies victory for

¹ See Frend, *Rise*, 316.

² On Justinian's ecclesiastical policy in this period, see Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 467–82.

³ On the battle of 554 and all that pertains to it, see *BASIC* I.1, 240–51.

the Ghassānids; some of them invoke the aid of the saint during the battle, while others decide to stay with him after it; and in the battle, Arethas' son Jabala falls, and his father buries him in a *martyrion* near Chalcis.

2. Two Greek inscriptions dated 558/59 were found engraved on the lintel of a monastery in Heliorama, which in Islamic times became a Umayyad palace at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, southwest of Palmyra. Both involve Arethas and have been discussed in a previous chapter.⁴ Only their relevance to the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids will be marked in this section. As has been suggested by the editor, the inscription in which Arethas is hailed and welcomed as a patrician, with invocations for him, most probably commemorates a visit by Arethas to the Monophysite monastery at Heliorama (Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī). The inscriptions then reveal the Ghassānid king Arethas as a ruler who cared for monastic life, and indeed in that most valuable Arabic list of Ḥamza, on the buildings of the Ghassānids, reference is made to their building monasteries.⁵ The spread of monasticism in Arethas' province, Arabia, is reflected in the most adequate and impressive way by the number of signatories in that letter which the abbots of Monophysite monasteries in Arabia wrote, late in his reign, on the subject of the Tritheistic Eugenius and Conon.⁶ Perhaps nothing illustrates better the place of the Ghassānid phylarch in the Monophysite scheme of things than the dating of Monophysite structures by his phylarchate; in one of these two inscriptions in Qaṣr al-Ḥayr, it is Arethas' phylarchate that dates the inscription in the Monophysite monastery.

3. After the death of Severus in 538, the Monophysite see of the Patriarchate of Antioch had been vacant, although apparently nominally filled by Constantine, the bishop of Laodicea until 553 when the latter died. Not until 557 was the post filled when Theodosius, the exiled Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, who lived in exile in Constantinople, consecrated Sergius of Tella as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, a position which he filled until his death three years after.⁷

Little is known about this transaction in the sources, and the question arises whether or not the Ghassānid phylarch had anything to do with it. The chances are that he did. It is difficult to believe that a zealous Monophysite, with a record such as his, would not have taken part in the efforts that finally succeeded in having a Monophysite patriarch, an incumbent of the see that Severus held. Two considerations commend this view. (1) Arethas was the one who brought about the consecration of Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore in 542, with the view of their ordaining and consecrating Monophysite clergy. In a delicate operation, such as this one that involved Sergius, the prestige and

⁴ See *ibid.*, 258–61.

⁵ On Ḥamza's list, see *BASIC II*.

⁶ See below, 824–38.

⁷ See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 192–95.

experience of the supreme Ghassānid phylarch would have been invaluable. (2) A few years later, Arethas actively engaged in a similar endeavor, the appointment of Paul as the successor of Sergius in the see of Antioch, and this is documented in a letter he wrote to Jacob.⁸ Thus the chances are that he also took an active part in the consecration of his predecessor, Sergius.

Mention must be made in the ecclesiastical history of this period of the consecration of John of Ephesus as bishop by Jacob Baradaeus around 558, in view of the importance of this bishop and his involvement with the Ghassānids. Jacob's consecration was effected in 542 on the initiative of Arethas, while John of Ephesus became, after the death of Theodosius, the chief Monophysite figure with whom the Ghassānid rulers, such as Arethas and his son Munḍir, communicated when they visited Constantinople. He was, above all, the historian who recorded the exploits of the Ghassānids on the battlefield and their achievements and efforts on behalf of the Monophysite movement. This has survived sporadically in his *Ecclesiastical History*, but especially regrettable is the loss of an entire chapter, almost a monograph, which he devoted to the history of the dynasty. Coming from an ecclesiastical historian, it is testimony to the importance of this dynasty in the ecclesiastical history of the sixth century.⁹

III. THE SIXTIES

A second phase in the last period of Arethas' activity may be assigned to the first half of the sixth decade, during which took place his visit to Constantinople in November 563. In that year the phylarch paid a visit to his patron, Justinian, during which he transacted some important political business, the most crucial of which was the question of succession to the phylarchate after his death. During that visit he engaged in non-secular activities pertaining to the Monophysite church to which allusion has already been made in the chapter that discussed in detail the political dimensions of his visit. These will now be discussed in detail, and they consist in his efforts to secure a successor to the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, Sergius, who died in 560; the consecration of the monk Paul, a *syncellus* of Theodosius in Constantinople, to that see; the beginning of the quarrel between Bishop Jacob Baradaeus and the new patriarch, Paul; and the possible contact of Arethas while in Constantinople with the future emperor Justin II and his wife Sophia.

In November 563 Arethas came to Constantinople to discuss the question of succession to the phylarchate after his death.¹⁰ He certainly met Justinian during his visit, and this raises the question of whether or not he met the

⁸ On this see below, 782–880.

⁹ On this see above, 761.

¹⁰ For this see *BASIC* I.1, 282–88.

future emperor and successor to Justinian, his nephew Justin II, and his wife, Sophia. The chances that he met both are good, and in support of this conclusion the following may be adduced.

1. Arethas was aware that not only he but also the emperor, who protected him, was getting old. Since imperial protection during the reign of Justinian was important to the prosperity of the Ghassānid phylarchate and the Monophysite movement, the Ghassānid king must have been anxious to make contacts in the capital to insure that the prospective emperor would not be an utter stranger to the Ghassānid cause. Although Justin II had not been designated co-emperor when Arethas made his visit to the capital in 563, the presumption must have been that he would be the successor, especially as his wife, Sophia, was none other than the niece¹¹ of the deceased empress, Theodora, whom Justinian adored and to whose memory he remained faithful.¹² Monophysitism had been revived by political influence in the capital when Theodora helped Arethas in his efforts to have Jacob and Theodore ordained around 540. The phylarch thus understood the value of having a "big friend" in the corridors of power in Constantinople.

2. Although the couple converted to Dyophysitism in 562, they had been staunch Monophysites before. Their decision to convert, prompted by reasons related to the succession to the throne,¹³ could not have weaned them altogether from Monophysite sympathies. Their attitude to Arethas must have been friendly. The Ghassānid phylarch must have been known to them personally in view of his role in resuscitating the Monophysite movement, especially as they might have met earlier in the 540s when Arethas paid a visit to Constantinople for the consecration of Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore.¹⁴ Their own daughter was called Arabia, and it has been suggested in a previous chapter¹⁵ that she was so called in honor of the Ghassānid phylarch of the Byzantine Provincia, the name of which was Arabia and whose phylarch professed the doctrinal persuasion which the imperial couple also professed.

3. Indirect evidence that Justin II met Arethas or saw him is provided by the well-known passage in John of Ephesus, which speaks of the impression that Arethas made on the capital by his forceful personality. When Justin II

¹¹ The daughter of either Comito or Anastasia.

¹² On all that pertains to the religious policies of Justin and Sophia, see two articles in which Averil Cameron has carefully examined the question, including their conversion from Monophysitism to Dyophysitism: Averil Cameron, "The Empress Sophia," *Byzantion* 45 (1975), 5–21, and "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1976), 51–67.

¹³ See Cameron, "The Empress Sophia," 7.

¹⁴ On this see above, 755–71.

¹⁵ See *BASIC* I.1, 318–22.

went almost insane in the 570s, his courtiers would calm him down by invoking the name of Arethas.¹⁶

Perhaps these contacts with Justin II and Sophia in the early 560s could explain why the Ghassānids remained on excellent terms with Justin II for some five years after the death of Justinian.¹⁷ Their king apparently felt so secure and sure of the new emperor's good will that he could comfortably make another journey to Constantinople in connection with the Tritheistic controversy. And it is striking that Ghassānid-Byzantine relations suddenly soured almost immediately after the death of Arethas, which suggests at least partially that these good relations rested on the personal relationship that obtained between Arethas and Justin, cemented or renewed during his trip to Constantinople in 563.

IV. THE LETTER OF ARETHAS TO JACOB BARADAEUS

Unmentioned by Theophanes, who reported Arethas' visit to Constantinople in 563, is the involvement of the Ghassānid king while he was still in Constantinople in the election of Paul as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch in 564. Evidence for this derives from a letter written by him in 563 to Jacob Baradaeus and which has survived. This is an important document for Ghassānid ecclesiastical history which has not been noted by some, and when it has been, it was wrongly dated and consequently misinterpreted.¹⁸

The confusion possibly goes back to a note by Chabot,¹⁹ the editor of the Monophysite documents of which the letter is part. Commenting on the letter of Patriarch Theodosius to the Monophysite bishops of the Orient concerning his choice of Paul to be the successor of the deceased Sergius as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, Chabot in a footnote dated the death of Sergius to 563 and the consecration of Paul to 566. F. Nau apparently followed this erroneous chronology and so completely misunderstood the contents of Arethas' letter, which he thought the Ghassānid king wrote in 566 and in which, he thought, Arethas discussed the two bishops, Eugenius and Conon, the proponents of the Tritheistic heresy!²⁰ It was left to E. W. Brooks²¹ to

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, 288, 364.

¹⁷ But it should also be remembered that Justin II, early in the reign, wanted to reconcile the Monophysites; he gave a magnificent funeral to their patriarch, Theodosius, and "allowed an oration which condemned Chalcedon"; Averil Cameron, "Early Religious Policies," 53.

¹⁸ Strangely enough, it was missed by Nöldeke. Among those who misdated it are Chabot and Nau, as will be seen in the course of this section.

¹⁹ See *Documenta ad Origines Monophysitarum*, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 2, vol. 37, versio, p. 62 note 2.

²⁰ See F. Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens* (Paris, 1933), 59–61. Before him, the usually perspicacious Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1208), perhaps misled by Klein, failed to evaluate the letter.

²¹ See E. W. Brooks, "The Patriarch Paul of Antioch and the Alexandrine Schism of 575," *BZ* 30 (1930), 468–70.

correct these erroneous views, when he related the letter to Arethas' visit in 563, documented by Theophanes with precision to the month of November, and in this he was followed by Honigmann and Frend.²² Yet although Arethas' letter was decisive in settling the date of the consecration of Paul, neither Brooks nor Honigmann studied the letter in detail or extracted from it data for a better understanding of the role of the Ghassānid dynasty in the ecclesiastical history of the period. Both had vague conceptions of the historical role of the dynasty. After noting the letter, and using it for precisely dating the consecration of Paul, all that Brooks had to say of Arethas was that he was "an Arab shaikh, Al-Harith,"²³ in spite of the fact that he is described in the rubric of the letter as *patricius* and *gloriosissimus*, while the contents of the letter should have suggested to him a historical personage quite different from what "shaikh" expresses and implies. It is, therefore, imperative to analyze this important document in detail.

The background of the letter may be briefly described. The Monophysite patriarch Theodosius wrote from Constantinople in 563 to Jacob Baradaeus and the Oriental bishops²⁴ recommending his own *syncellus*, the archimandrite Paul, for the Patriarchate of Antioch after the see had been vacant for some three years following the death of the last incumbent, Sergius, in 560. The efforts of Theodosius to have Paul consecrated coincided with the visit of Arethas to Constantinople in November of the same year. Arethas, the staunch Monophysite who had been the spirit behind the consecration of Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore around 540, naturally cooperated fully with Theodosius in his efforts. He thus wrote a letter to Jacob Baradaeus on this subject, the gist of which may be presented as follows.

Before he departed from Constantinople, Arethas was informed of something, which Jacob had been informed about before. About this same matter, archimandrite Paul, who had written Jacob three letters formerly, was now also writing to him another letter. Arethas asks Jacob to come and see him personally and bring the letters with him so that they may discuss the matter together. He further adds that if Jacob, for some necessity, could not come personally to him, he should send the letters to him and choose for carriers men worthy of transacting such important business. Arethas then refers to something else: Patriarch Theodosius revealed to him a matter concerning Paul, superior of the convent, which pleased him greatly. He ends the letter by asking Jacob to pray for him.

The resumé of the letter should explain why scholars were discouraged from analyzing it. It is obscure in its references, and the obscurity is deliber-

²² See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 175-76, 196 note 3; also Frend, *Rise*, 291.

²³ See Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 469.

²⁴ Frend, *Rise*, 291 and note 3.

are because of the secrecy that characterized the correspondence between members of a tolerated "heretical" church such as that of the Monophysites. While the secrets of the second part of the letter can now be easily unlocked, since it is a reference to the nomination by Theodosius of Paul to be the patriarch of Antioch, those of the first part must remain shrouded in their obscurity, and compared to the second they must be relatively unimportant. In order to extract as much from the letter as is possible, the text is given *in extenso* in the Latin version of Chabot.

EXEMPLAR EPISTULAE GLORIOSISSIMI PATRICII HARETH, SCRIPTAE AD
VENERABILEM MAR IACOBUM.

Noverit sanctitas tua quod postquam complanavit viam Deus, et sancta Deigenitrix, rebusque meis dispositis, cum in eo essem ut exirem
5 ab hac urbe regia, narratum est mihi negotium de quo vobis locutus est antea, et propter quod etiam nunc scripsit vobis venerabilis abbas Paulus, archimandrita magnus. Et dixit mihi ad vos antea tres misisse epistulas. Optime igitur faciet sanctitas vestra si, personaliter apud me divertens, adduxerit etiam epistulas et eos quibus competit negotium
10 tractare, sicut ipsi praescripserunt vobis. Si autem id facere non quidem vobis contingit, urgente necessitate, quae non sinat vos ad me venire, viros cum epistulis mitte, et spero fore ut Deus secundum beneplacitum suum disponat negotium. Tales autem viros te decet eligere ad negotium, qui apti sint ad huiusmodi ministerium. Id etiam notum facio
15 sanctitati vestrae, beatum papam Theodosium aequum iudicavisse ut mihi patefaceret quod spectat ad abbatem Paulum archimandritam magnum; et valde gavisus sum, et glorificavi Deum. Locutus sum enim cum eo facie ad faciem, et multum profecit anima mea, et studeo preces eius acquirere per ea quae mihi praescripsit. Haec scripsi, venerans vestigia
20 sanctitatis vestrae, et enixe rogo ut memoriam mei faciatis in orationibus vestris sanctis et Deo acceptis.²⁵

Line 1: Arethas' Byzantine dignity and rank, *patricius* and *gloriosissimus*, are given rather than his Arab or his purely secular ones, such as *basileus* and *phylarchos*. This is appropriate in an ecclesiastical document, and it suggests that of the many titles he had, these two were the highest and most important by which he came to be known in ecclesiastical circles.²⁶

Lines 3–5: the problems Arethas had gone to Constantinople to discuss have been solved with the help of God and the Mother of God; *inter alia*, they present the problems of when and whence the letter was written. The use of the demonstrative adjective, *hac*, applied to Constantinople in line 5 might

²⁵ *Documenta*, versio, p. 100; for the Syriac version, see textus, pp. 143–44.

²⁶ For his Byzantine titles and ranks, see *BASIC* I.1, 288–97.

suggest that he wrote the letter from the city, but the previous verbs would suggest that he had already departed from Constantinople when he wrote. If he wrote it from Constantinople, the date of the letter must be November or December 563 since Theophanes precisely dates his arrival to November; if after his departure, it must be dated early in 564 since it would have taken him at least three months to be back in Oriens.²⁷

Rebus meis dispositis in line 4 must refer to the matter Theophanes mentioned when he recorded Arethas' visit to Constantinople, namely, the choice of a successor to him after his death. Although it was safely inferred in a previous chapter that his hopes for his son Mundir as successor were fulfilled,²⁸ Theophanes is silent on the outcome. The letter states the success of the visit explicitly, and, what is more, the statement comes from the protagonist himself.

Sancta Deigenitrix: the reference to the Virgin Mary in this letter is striking; together with God, she facilitated Arethas' mission in Constantinople and crowned it with success. It was in the late sixth century, or perhaps the second half of it, that the cult of the Virgin Mary grew in Constantinople in her capacity as intercessor. She protected Constantinople, and many churches in the city were dedicated to her. Arethas, a pious Christian, must have been aware of this Marian atmosphere in Constantinople in this period, and he reflects it in his letter. It was not Christ who helped him but the Mother of God, the Theotokos, who in this period appears in Constantinople not as *mater dolorosa* but as the great intercessor.²⁹ The term "Theotokos" also fit well with Monophysite theology that emphasized the divine in Christ which the term reflected neatly and trenchantly.

Lines 5–8: these mention a correspondence that involved Paul, the archimandrite in Constantinople, and Jacob. The former had sent the latter three communications and added another while Arethas was still in Constantinople. There is no way of finding out what this correspondence involved. But evidently it was an important ecclesiastical matter for the Monophysites, in which clerics in the capital and in Oriens were involved, and important enough for the Ghassānid king to be asked to participate in the arrangement described for its execution.

Lines 8–10: Arethas asks Jacob to come and see him personally and to bring both the letters and those worthy of transacting the business under discussion in them. The letter makes clear that in these four letters that Jacob received, he was given instructions to proceed to Arethas to discuss the matter

²⁷ On the duration of the journey, see *ibid.*, 519.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, 283–85.

²⁹ On all this, see Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 24.1 (1978), 79–108.

with him. Arethas' request to Jacob does not specify the locality of the meeting, but the clear implication is that it is well known to Jacob, who visited the Ghassānid camp quite often since his ordination around 540. Possibly Jābiya in the Golān is meant. The instructions in the letter reflect the importance of Arethas for the Monophysites even in ecclesiastical matters; the phylarch was a power.

Lines 10–14: Arethas suggests that if for some overriding reason, Jacob could not come personally to him, he should send the letters with men worthy of the problem to be discussed and the business to be transacted. The recommendation reflects the seriousness with which Arethas took up his ecclesiastical assignment and the circumspection with which he tried to execute it.

The secrecy that envelops the contents of these letters, of course, reflects the plight of the Monophysite church in this period, a persecuted, then tolerated church, the clerics of which had to be careful in hiding their intentions. Arethas was primarily a soldier and a general, but the sources do not have much to say on the qualities of his generalship. This letter, although it deals with ecclesiastical matters, gives a glimpse of qualities that are easily transferable to the battlefield, such as secrecy and circumspection in planning.

Lines 14–17: Patriarch Theodosius deemed Arethas worthy of disclosing to him his plans for Paul, who is described as an archimandrite. Unlike the contents of the letters mentioned in the first part of the letter, this conversation with Theodosius can only have had for its object the prospective consecration of Paul as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch. There is no doubt that he is the same Paul mentioned earlier in the letter, since his description in both passages is identical, "abbas Paulus, archimandrita magnus." The circumstances that led Theodosius to take this step in 563 are detailed by him in one of his letters.³⁰ What is relevant in this context is the Ghassānid involvement in it: Theodosius is not content to send letters to Jacob and the Oriental bishops, but he involves Arethas in it. He was aware of the importance of Arethas in the affairs of his church and the fact that the church owed the resuscitation of its hierarchy to his efforts around 540. Theodosius would have written to him in Oriens invoking his help, but Arethas' visit to Constantinople in the nick of time brought him personally in touch with Theodosius. Line 17 reflects the emotional involvement of Arethas in what Theodosius had told him, and it is certain that on his return to Oriens he participated in the transactions that led to the consecration of Paul, whom he continued to support after his consecration, against his enemies and detractors.³¹

Lines 17–19: Arethas says that he spoke with "him" face to face, that he

³⁰ Letter to Jacob, Conon, Eugenius, and the Oriental bishops, preserved in *Documenta*, versio, pp. 60–62, esp. p. 60.

³¹ See below, 801–5.

was edified by his conversation, and that he was anxious to have his prayers for accomplishing what he had instructed him to do. It is not clear from this sentence whether the referent is Paul or Theodosius and arguments could be advanced for either, but the fact that at the end he speaks of "his instructions" (*praescripsit*) suggests the authority of Theodosius, the patriarch.³²

Lines 19–21: the letter ends with the expression of pious sentiments toward Jacob, not insignificant for an evaluation of Arethas' Christianity.

This rare document, which has survived accidentally, is a measure of what has been lost and which could document the role of the Ghassānid dynasty in ecclesiastical history. The Ghassānid king spent all his long reign in support of the Monophysite movement, and his achievements must have been considerable and recorded by Monophysite writers. The foregoing paragraphs in which the letter has been analyzed have brought out some important aspects of the personality of Arethas. The letter reflects the central importance of Arethas in the affairs of the Monophysite church, an importance recognized by the two hierarchs, Theodosius and Paul in Constantinople. He is, therefore, entrusted with delicate and important assignments, one of which was working toward the election and consecration of the prospective Monophysite patriarch of Antioch.

The letter also reflects unmistakably the genuine piety of the Ghassānid king. It opens with gratitude to God and the Theotokos for bringing his efforts to a successful conclusion. In the eventuality that Jacob could not come personally to him, he hopes that, nonetheless, God will prosper his endeavors in dealing with the matter in question. After speaking with Theodosius, he says how edified he was by his conversation and hopes to have the benefit of his prayers. Finally, in addressing Jacob, he expresses the most profound sentiments of respect toward the Jacobite saint. Thus the letter adds a new dimension to the personality of the Ghassānid king in relation to Monophysitism, namely, his piety, just as the passages in Michael the Syrian reveal another aspect of his Monophysitism, the "theologian," not in the technical, professional sense but in the sense of one who had a working knowledge of the theological issues at stake in the controversies of the sixth century.³³

Finally, the letter makes amply clear that Arethas was a literate federate phylarch who knew at least two languages, Arabic and Greek, and possibly three (Syriac).³⁴ This is clearly implied throughout the letter where he specifi-

³² The word "instructions" also appears in the letters that Paul wrote to Jacob (mentioned earlier in this letter, line 11), but the instructions there are not for Arethas but for Jacob.

³³ On his encounter with Patriarch Ephraim, see above, 746–55; on his participation in the Trinitarian controversy, see below, 805–24.

³⁴ This topic has already been broached in the account of Arethas' encounter with Ephraim; see above, 752–53.

cally says that Paul spoke to him and that he spoke with Theodosius. These two clerics knew no Arabic; both were Egyptians who could have spoken Coptic and also Greek. Since Coptic was out of the question for Arethas, the latter must have spoken Greek with them, the language he must have used when he also saw the emperor during his visit in Constantinople. Paul, the Egyptian, must have written to Jacob the three letters mentioned in the letter of Arethas in a language common to both, which could only have been Greek, which Jacob knew; so when Arethas asks Jacob to send the letters to him in case he was unable to come, the clear implication is that he could read them. Finally, the letter itself is evidence of Arethas' literacy in either Syriac or Greek, since he could communicate with Jacob (who knew no Arabic) only in one of these two.³⁵ The language of Monophysitism in Oriens was Syriac, the language of the Oriental Christians, and it is difficult to believe that Arethas, whose base of operations both as a phylarch and as a Monophysite was Oriens, would not have known that language. If so, Arethas must have been a *vir trilinguis*, his linguistic expertise encompassing Arabic, Syriac, and Greek, and the same may be predicated of his son and successor, Mundir, who was exactly in the same situation as his father.

V. BISHOP THEODORE AND PATRIARCH PAUL

Paul was consecrated in Oriens in 564. He had been sent thither by Theodosius and was secretly and hastily consecrated "*extra muros in exile*" as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch successor to Sergius. The laying on of hands was performed by three prominent Monophysite bishops: Jacob Baradaeus, Eugenius of Seleucia (Isauria), and Eunomius of Amida.³⁶ The choice of Paul by Theodosius and his consecration proved disastrous to the fortunes of Monophysitism in the second half of the sixth century, but only what is relevant to this *biennium* before the death of Justinian and to the Ghassānids will be discussed here.

As indicated in the preceding section, the Ghassānid king played a role in the negotiations that finally resulted in the consecration of Paul. Theodosius approached him while he was still in Constantinople; he wrote to Jacob about it; and there is no doubt that he did what he could to facilitate the consecration, which he probably also attended. But his own bishop, Theodore, is conspicuous by his absence both in the negotiations that led to the consecration and during the consecration itself. When Theodosius decided to

³⁵ F. Nau thought that the letter could have been written in Syriac, but more probably in Greek. Sebastian Brock, in a personal communication, thinks the same. Thus the letter, as it has survived, would be a Syriac version of the original Greek. See Nau, *Arabes chrétiens*, 59 note 1.

³⁶ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 196.

inform his Monophysite bishops of the choice of his *syncellus* Paul for the patriarchate, he wrote an epistle to the Oriental bishops but designated explicitly only three as the addressees: Jacob Baradaeus, Conon of Tarsus, and Eugenius of Seleucia.³⁷ Theodore is not mentioned by name but possibly subsumed under the "Oriental bishops" to whom the epistle was also addressed. This is a little strange, because Theodore had been associated with Jacob since their historic consecrations around 540 in which Arethas was involved and had continued to be associated with him in ecclesiastical documents.³⁸ But a letter sent by Theodore immediately after the consecration of Paul and addressed to the latter explains the omission. Theodore was not in Oriens at his see (Jā-biya?), but in Constantinople, as is clear from the rubric of his letter, which has survived,³⁹ and the fact must have been known to Theodosius. This also explains why he took no part in the "laying on of hands" that consecrated Paul and why his name does not appear among the subscriptions appended to the letter addressed to Theodosius after the consecration and which informed him of the event.⁴⁰ But if he did not participate in the "laying on of hands," he was not left out of the deliberations that resulted in the consecration of Paul. This is clearly stated in the letter he addressed to Paul after the latter's consecration: "consilii particeps fui in ordinatione vestra legitima."⁴¹

What was Theodore doing in Constantinople at this juncture? The sources are silent, but it is natural to suppose that he accompanied Arethas, whose bishop he was, when the latter visited the capital at this very time in 563. If Theodore did not attend the consecration, his letter on it has survived, which thus may be paired with the letter of the Ghassānid king on the same occasion. As a letter from an Arab bishop, it is reproduced here because of the rarity of documents emanating from Arab ecclesiastics in this period. It is a short letter in which he salutes the new patriarch, Paul, and his consecration as the patriarch of Antioch. He lauds his virtues, and since he did not attend

³⁷ See *Documenta*, versio, 63–65.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 101, 105, 115–17, 123, 125, 136, 139, 142, 145; see also the section on Theodore, below, 806–8.

³⁹ For the rubric of the letter, see *Documenta*, versio, p. 65, lines 31–33.

⁴⁰ See *Documenta*, pp. 63–65. It is noteworthy that those who "laid the hands" on Paul were not exactly those to whom Theodosius wrote, Eugenius and Eunomius. Conon appears among the signatories of the letter, not as a consecrator, but as one who approved and gave his assent to the consecration: see *ibid.*, p. 64, lines 30–38.

⁴¹ For this statement of his involvement in the deliberations, see the subscription in his letter, *ibid.*, p. 66, lines 25–26. The same phrase, "consilii particeps," is used by Conon of Tarsus, John of Qinnasrīn, and John of Epiropolis, who also did not take part in the "laying on of hands" but who were consulted: *ibid.*, pp. 64–65; "e Epiropolis" seems to be a corrupt reading: *ibid.*, p. 65 note 1.

It is relevant to mention that many of the clergy in Oriens were not consulted concerning the consecration of Paul as patriarch, and they did not like it: see Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 470 and note 2.

the consecration, he hastens to send his acceptance of it. He rejoices in the peace of the church and asks for the prayers of the new patriarch and those of Theodosius. The Latin version of the letter reads as follows.

EXEMPLAR EPISTULAE QUAE FACTA EST CONSTANTINOPOLI A VENERABILI MAR THEODORO, quia non adfuit, nec subscripsit epistulae communi venerabilium episcoporum.

Domino meo sanctissimo et beato patri spiritali et doctore, archiepiscopo et patriarchae Paulo, Theodorus.

Laudabilis omnino est qui omnem sollicitudinem adhibet ut liberet animam suam ab omni iniquatione peccati, maxime vero a vana gloria et inani phantasia et a malis ex his orientibus. Scriptum est enim: "Beatus vir qui omnia veretur per modestiam." Cum itaque haec a se removit sanctitas vestra, et ad solum Deum mentem suam defixit, id ei datum est ut in angustiis sit cum populo Dei; nam non suorum tantum sed etiam plurimorum, ut viverent, sollicita est.

Quia vero his quae facta sunt non aderam, necesse mihi visum est, ut per hanc meam epistolam miseram ad vos, beati, properarem; nam ordinationem vestram et manuum impositionem in patriarchatum, secundum Christum, quasi praesens essem et perfecissem, reputavi; et de stabilitate pacis ecclesiarum Dei sanctarum gaudens, eam accepi. Ut ea renideatis, ego infimus deprecor, quemadmodum in illa resplendet is qui cum sanctis est, pater noster et patriarcha et doctor totius orbis, sanctus Severus. Cuius precibus, et precibus eius qui nunc stat et ecclesiam sanctam Dei ubique dirigit, qui, post Deum, dominus noster est et a Deo servatur, sancti et beati patriarchae Theodosii, precibus etiam vestris, liberemur ab omni astutia Calumniatoris et malitia humana, et in fide recta et immaculata, in mutuo amore, vero et fraterno, servemur omnes, deprecamur.

Exemplar subscriptionis: Theodorus gratia Dei episcopus e dioecesi orientali, cum sanxi et consilii particeps fui in ordinatione vestra legitima, notum feci et signavi propria manu.⁴²

The letter contains little that would contribute to a better knowledge of Arab ecclesiastical history in this period. There are, however, two phrases that are of some importance: "in fide recta," in the body of the text, and "episcopus e dioecesi orientali," in the subscription. As each denomination in the Orient considered itself Orthodox, Theodore, too, considers his own confession, the Monophysite, "the Orthodox" one, and to the present day the Syriac church calls itself "Orthodox." This is a matter of some importance to the

⁴² *Documenta*, versio, pp. 65-66.

problem of the existence of theological vocabulary in Arabic in this period. Theodore's letter has survived in its Syriac version, but in view of the ethnic origins of the two—Paul, an Egyptian, and Theodore, an Arab—the language of the original letter must have been one that was common to both, almost certainly Greek. Thus the term *recta* (Syriac, *trîstâ*) translates Greek ὀρθος (*orthos*). Its Arabic equivalent in contemporary Arabic poetry on the Ghassānids is *qawīm*, a *hapax legomenon* in what has survived of that poetry, but a most precious survival. Its attestation in the letter of the Arab bishop of the Ghassānids is thus welcome to the discussion of this problem.⁴³

Equally important is Theodore's description of himself as *episcopus e dioecesi orientali*, in Syriac, *pûrnāsâ madnhayyâ*. His jurisdiction has been a controversial matter and has been discussed in a previous section.⁴⁴ The importance of this phrase in the letter derives from the fact that this is an official document written and signed by Theodore himself, while the other descriptions of his jurisdiction come from other sources, the *Vitae*.

Theodore's reference to himself as a bishop from the Diocese of Oriens is significant and calls for the following observations. It invites comparison with the other subscriptions in the letter addressed to Theodosius after the consecration.⁴⁵ Three of them are so well known that they do not specify their exact jurisdiction: Jacob, Eugenius, and Eunomius; three specify Conon of Tarsus, John of Qinnasrīn, and John of Epiropolis(?); two are silent on their jurisdictions: Sergius and John. Thus Theodore, the Arab bishop of the Ghassānids, is unique in the way he describes his jurisdiction; it is related to Oriens, roughly coinciding with the Patriarchate of Antioch over which the newly consecrated Paul presides.

This could prove the point that Theodore's jurisdiction was a large one that cut across boundaries: in Ghassānland, the limitrophe, and the Arabian region, which extended to northern Hījāz. It is doubtful that Jābiya, the main headquarters of the Ghassānids, would have been intelligible or well known to Paul, who was an Egyptian and had spent his last years before his consecration as a monk in Constantinople. Theodore, therefore, signs in such a way as to be intelligible to him and also to relate himself to the diocese or the patriarchate of which Paul was now the incumbent.

It is perhaps significant that he refers to himself as bishop from the Diocese of Oriens, thus using the secular administrative term rather than the ecclesiastical term, the Patriarchate of Antioch or of Oriens. This could relate his jurisdiction to that of the Ghassānid Arethas, who was appointed in 529 to the extraordinary *Basileia* over Oriens (or most of it), the imperial diocese,

⁴³ For this see *BASIC* II.

⁴⁴ See above, 761–68.

⁴⁵ See *Documenta*, pp. 64–65.

and not just to one particular province. Thus this self-description of his jurisdiction could confirm its extensiveness, commensurate with that of Arethas in Oriens.

This interpretation could receive confirmation from the fact that the secular Diocese of Oriens and the ecclesiastical Patriarchate of Antioch were not coterminous, since Juvenal of Jerusalem in 449 succeeded in having the Patriarchate of Jerusalem carved out of that of Antioch; thus the three Palestines were outside the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Antioch. Now, according to the *Vita*, Theodore was also responsible for Palestine, even as far as Jerusalem. This falls outside the Patriarchate of Antioch but not outside the confines of secular Oriens. If so, the subscription would definitively clinch the fact of his extensive jurisdiction and thus confirm the *Vita*.

The validity of this reasoning depends on whether Syriac *pûrnāsâ*, which translates diocese, is really the secular term as opposed to patriarchate, Syriac *patriarkûtâ*, the clearly ecclesiastical term. "Oriens" is used in these ecclesiastical documents either as a noun, *madnhâ*, or as an adjective, *madnhayyâ*, to refer to the Monophysite ecclesiastics and monks in the East (the Patriarchate of Antioch), perhaps as a continuation of its usage before Juvenal separated the Three Palestines from the patriarchate which then was coterminous with Oriens, or roughly so. But the term *pûrnāsâ* which Theodore uses is not used elsewhere in these documents with "Oriens"; only "Oriens" is used to qualify the ecclesiastics in such phrases as the Oriental bishops or the bishops of Oriens;⁴⁶ Paul is referred to as the patriarch of Antioch. When the archimandrites of the Province of Arabia wrote their well-known letter, confirming the condemnation of the Tritheistic bishops, Eugenius and Conon, they referred to themselves as "cuncti provinciae Arabiae humiles abbates orthodoxi." They did not use the ecclesiastical term "diocese" but *provincia*, and so it is in the original Syriac, the transliteration of Greek *eparchia* (ἐπαρχία).⁴⁷ In so doing, they may have wanted to reflect their being part of Arethas' phylarchal jurisdiction in the Provincia. If so, Theodore may have wanted to do the same by allying himself with Arethas and with Oriens as a secular diocese, the scene of Arethas' authority and activity, which was also more accurately reflective of his own extensive jurisdiction, which included Palestine.

⁴⁶ See *Documenta*, p. 60, line 2, and p. 62, line 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, versio, p. 145, line 26, and textus, p. 209, line 17.

XII

The Reign of Justin II (565–578)

INTRODUCTION

Justin was the first of the successors of Justinian to initiate new policies that diverged from those of his predecessor. These new policies ultimately included ecclesiastical ones as well. For Byzantinists, the reign falls into two periods, divided by the co-rulership of Tiberius in 574 when Justin was certified insane. This division is also valid for Ghassānid-Byzantine relations but needs to be modified because of the death of Arethas in 569. These relations experienced a drastic change after the accession of his son Munḍir. Hence the reign may be divided into two phases: (1) from 565 to 569 when Arethas died; (2) from the accession of Munḍir in 569 to the death of Justin II in 578.

A

The First Phase (565–569)

I. INTRODUCTION

The first phase, 565–569, is dominated by the figure of Arethas. In fact this period witnessed the climax of Arethas' involvement in ecclesiastical matters, since his military role was over, with peace reigning on the main fronts where he had fought—the Persian and the Lakhmid. He thus devotes his energies to the peace of his church, and his presence is felt everywhere in Monophysite circles and in inter-Monophysite feuds. Not only the Ghassānid king but also the Ghassānid bishop, Theodore, play an important role in this period. Not much had been heard of him (at least in extant sources) in the preceding twenty years or so, but now in the course of this *quadrennium* he is in evidence everywhere.

Thus the Ghassānids in this period dominate the scene of Monophysite history, and the Ghassānid king and his bishop work hand in hand toward their common goals. In addition to working for inter-Monophysite amity, they had to deal with the central government in Constantinople, which in this period was still well disposed toward the Monophysites and was working energetically to bring about the reconciliation of the Monophysite and Dyophysite camps. Even so, the ecclesiastical problems they had to deal with were grow-

ing in complexity: the consequences of the election and consecration of Paul as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch and inter-Monophysite theological controversies, especially that of Tritheism.

II. CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE MONOPHYSITES

The imperial mood in Constantinople as far as the Monophysites were concerned was, generally speaking, a continuation of that of the previous reign. The central government continued the work of reconciliation, as may be discerned from a short description of the key personalities in the capital, with whom the Ghassānid phylarch and his bishop had to deal.

Justin II: the new emperor, a nephew of Justinian, had been a Monophysite before he converted to the Chalcedonian position in 562.¹ So he shared with his uncle a feeling for the Monophysites, in spite of his official position as the emperor of Chalcedonian Byzantium. But while the uncle in his last years had gone the length of subscribing to the extreme form of Julianism, in the form of Aphthartodocetism, the nephew belonged to the moderate wing of Monophysitism, the Severan, which had by then become the "orthodox" version of that confession.

Sophia: the new empress was the niece of Theodora and, like her husband, had been a Monophysite of the Severan persuasion before converting in the same year.² She continued the role of her deceased aunt as a force in Dyophysite-Monophysite relations in this period and reflected the friendliness of her husband, even more so than he, to the movement.

Patriarch Theodosius: the death of the Monophysite patriarch Theodosius in June 566 created a vacuum in the Monophysite ranks, but it was soon filled by the historian of the movement, John of Ephesus, who had been a trusted friend and advisor of Justinian's in propagating the Christian faith in pagan pockets in Anatolia.

Athanasius, the grandson of Empress Theodora: Athanasius was also a second cousin of Sophia, the niece of the empress. He was thus a relative of the imperial family, was influential, and had the ear of the imperial couple. He was a Tritheistic Monophysite who played a very important role in this period before his sudden death around 570, as will be discussed later.³

Thus the capital was sympathetic, even more so in this *quadrennium* than in the previous reign. The Monophysites had powerful connections in the capital, which had a large number of Monophysite clerics residing in it. No

¹ See John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, Book II, chap. 10, pp. 50–51. In all that pertains to the early ecclesiastical policy of Justin, see Averil Cameron, "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1976), 51–67.

² See John of Ephesus in the preceding footnote. On Sophia, see Averil Cameron, "The Empress Sophia," *Byzantion* 45 (1975), 5–21.

³ See below, 796–803. His death is recorded in John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, p. 195, line 23.

wonder that the new emperor went to extremes in his friendly attitude to the Monophysites, and this was reflected strikingly in three ways. (1) After his accession, he gave Theodosius a royal welcome at court in 565 and a splendid funeral the following year; the monk Athanasius delivered a funeral eulogy that amounted to a condemnation of Chalcedon.⁴ (2) In 566 the emperor issued an edict that was nearly a surrender to the Monophysite expectations, and the exiled Monophysite bishops were recalled.⁵ (3) More important, although Chalcedonian, he became an arbitrator between the warring Monophysite groups in the capital.⁶ As a former Monophysite, he perhaps genuinely wanted to unite their ranks, but more probably, as a current Dyophysite, he wanted them united for the more important task of effecting a final reconciliation between them and the Chalcedonians, without having the additional difficulty of dealing with splinter groups.

The efforts of Justin and his wife, Sophia, to bring about a reconciliation reached their climax when Justin convened the conference of 567, which was held significantly in the monastery of Mar Zakkai in Callinicum in the heart of Monophysite territory.⁷ It was at this conference that Justin's edict was read by the patrician John.⁸ The assembled bishops almost accepted it⁹ but for the fanatical monks who thus brought the conference to naught.¹⁰ Theodore, the Arab bishop, accepted it, and when the *libellus* (as Michael the Syrian calls it) was torn to pieces by Cosmas the monk,¹¹ he, with Jacob and others, successfully persuaded the patrician John to make another attempt at reconciliation.¹² But the second attempt failed, again because of the violent opposition of the monks. Thus the Ghassānid bishop was on the side of reconciliation, and so must have been the phylarch behind him.

Although Justin was irritated by his failure at Callinicum, he continued to work diligently for the union of the two churches and for reconciling the Monophysites among themselves, but he did not again go as far as he had when he issued his edict of 566. The second edict, issued in 571, was much more restrained; and so a golden opportunity was missed in 567. Hence the

⁴ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 283.

⁵ It is well analyzed by J. Maspero in *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1923), 167–68. In Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 486, the edict is called "le premier Hénorique."

⁶ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 284–85; Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 485–86.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 486; see also Cameron, "Justin II," 62–64.

⁸ For the text of the edict, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 289–90, first column.

⁹ The bishops wanted an explicit declaration or statement on the unity of the nature of Christ.

¹⁰ See Michael, *Chronique*, II, 287–89.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹² *Ibid.*, 288.

conference of Callinicum was a fiasco and marked "the completion of the break between Chalcedonian and Monophysite communities" in Oriens, as has been observed by church historians of this period.¹³ And so it was for the Ghassānids and for Arab-Byzantine relations, which start to deteriorate around 570, almost immediately after the death of Arethas.

III. THE PATRIARCHATE OF PAUL: INTER-MONOPHYSITE DISSENSION

If the conference of Callinicum represented the completion of the break between the Dyophysites and the Monophysites, the patriarchate of Paul ushered in the period of tension between the central government and the Ghassānid phylarchate, and this took place during this period.

The consecration of Paul as the patriarch of Antioch¹⁴ was a disaster for the Monophysite church and continued to be such until his death some two decades later. His consecration created tensions within the ranks of the Monophysites in Oriens when it was deemed not quite canonical, since many bishops were not consulted by Theodosius, who proposed him. In Egypt, his native country, Paul also created dissension within the ranks of the Monophysites, already divided into various warring groups, when he appeared in Alexandria and made no secret of his desire to succeed the deceased Theodosius as his successor in the see of St. Mark. This in turn developed into a regional Monophysite quarrel between those in Egypt and those in Oriens, since the former, having rejected Paul, spoke of the uncanonicity of his consecration by Jacob.

In the 570s Paul caused much hard feeling by his vagabonding on both sides of the doctrinal frontier, when he accepted the Chalcedonian position, then recanted, and finally divided Monophysite Oriens into Paulites, who supported him against the Jacobites, who supported Jacob. Most relevant here was his quarrel with Athanasius the monk, who had recommended himself for the Alexandrine see. This quarrel proved disastrous to imperial-federate relations since it involved the central government and the Ghassānid phylarchate, a neglected but important dimension of the patriarchate of Paul.¹⁵

A

Athanasius proved to be the catalyst in this delicate imperial-federate relationship; therefore, it is necessary to say a few words on him, especially as

¹³ Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 487; quotation from Frend, *Rise*, 319.

¹⁴ The fundamental article on Paul is still E. W. Brooks, "The Patriarch Paul of Antioch," *BZ* 30 (1930), 468–76, but he shows no interest in or knowledge of the Arab profile of Paul's career nor of his role in the ultimate deterioration of Arab-Byzantine relations. For Brooks, Arethas, who was *patricius* and *basileus*, was a shaykh; *ibid.*, 469.

¹⁵ See the preceding note; what is said of Brooks is also applicable to other ecclesiastical historians of this period.

he is neglected or treated unceremoniously by modern authors.¹⁶ Athanasius was a monk who was close to the Monophysite patriarch, Sergius of Antioch (died ca. 560), his preceptor. He accepted the Tritheistic doctrine of John Askusnaghes of Apamea and passed his papers on to John Philoponos, the Aristotelian Christian philosopher of Alexandria, who composed the credo of Tritheism. At the funeral of Patriarch Theodosius in Constantinople in June 566, he delivered the funeral oration, which condemned Chalcedon. So he was an extreme Monophysite, and an outspoken one at that.

Equally important is that he was both rich and influential in Constantinople and at the imperial court: he was the grandson of Theodora through her daughter and thus the second cousin of Empress Sophia. As Justin II had himself been a Monophysite and now, as a Chalcedonian emperor, was anxious to bring about a union of the two doctrinal persuasions, Athanasius was a pivotal figure in Justin's scheme of things. Michael the Syrian expressly says that Justin used him to effect a union of the two churches.¹⁷

After the death of Theodosius, Athanasius coveted the see of Alexandria, and he had the full support of Justin.¹⁸ Although he failed to become the patriarch of Alexandria, his presence in Egypt coincided with that of Paul, who had arrived there in 565 before the death of Theodosius, who had ordered him to proceed to Egypt in order to ordain Monophysite clergy. The clash between the two rival claimants to the see of Alexandria resulted in ugly mutual defamatory statements which the two issued against each other, and which were made public and further embittered the internal dissension of the Monophysites, both within Egypt and without. Most relevant here is the involvement of Justin II and its consequences on Arab-Byzantine relations, both ecclesiastical and other.

B

As the emperor had hoped that his nominee would be elected to the Alexandrian see, he was not thrilled to hear that the patriarch of Antioch, Paul, had contested this nomination and thus had contributed to its failure. Besides, Athanasius' report on Paul, composed with the express purpose of defaming his character and thus declaring him invalid for nomination and

¹⁶ With the exception of Maspero in *Histoire des patriarches*; see the many references in the index but especially pp. 199–201 and 218–22. His views, however, on Athanasius' "patriarchate" over Alexandria for 566–571 (*ibid.*, 213), deriving from the later historian Eutychius, are now questionable. The successor of Theodosius was Peter IV, the predecessor of Damian; see *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1991), s.v. Peter IV. A contemporary and a well-informed historian, John of Ephesus, gives the patriarchal sequence in Alexandria as Theodosius, Peter, Damian; see *HE*, versio, pp. 34–35.

¹⁷ See Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 470–71.

¹⁸ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 253.

incumbency, was laid before Justin in Constantinople, brought by Athanasius himself. The reaction of Justin to Paul's doings in Egypt is faithfully reflected, not in the paraphrases of later historians but in his own words, in the letter he sent to the military commander of Daras immediately after the conference of Callinicum. It is a precious document that is important for tracing the roots of the Byzantine-Ghassānid conflict and for the reference to the Ghassānid bishop, Theodore. As it is neglected or treated obliquely in modern works, it is well that it be reproduced *in extenso*, with a brief commentary.

The emperor orders the commandant to see to it that Jacob and Theodore come to him in Constantinople in order to discuss church matters; he asks him to assure the Monophysites that his desire for peace is genuine and that they need not fear any persecution; he makes a scathing condemnation of Paul and his conduct in Alexandria and orders his name to be erased from the diptychs; he informs the commandant that he had put in jail the *apocrisarii* of Paul, Stephanus and Longinus, but not because of their faith; and finally he repeats his desire to have Jacob and Theodore come to him. In Chabot's translation, Justin's letter reads as follows.

Ordre de Notre Majesté: à Jacques et à Theodorus, de venir ici pour l'affaire de l'Église.

Toi, Sergona, commandant en chef de Dara, conseille-leur, autant que tu le pourras, de faire cela; car nous voulons, Dieu en est témoin, qu'il n'y ait qu'une Église. C'est pourquoi, n'apporte aucune négligence à cette affaire, pour le salut des âmes. Nous ne serons point le persécuteur des Διακρινομένοι, et nous voulons que rien de semblable n'ait lieu de nos jours, mais nous voulons établir la concorde.

A cause de nos péchés quelques hommes méchants se trouvèrent prêts à s'interposer et empêchèrent la paix. A propos de Paulus le bègue, apprends ses oeuvres perverses: Dès qu'il eut pris les biens de feu le pape Theodosius, il s'en alla à Alexandrie et se proclama évêque, mais il ne fut pas accepté; il revint à Antioche, et ne fut pas accepté. Et qui accepterait ce démon? Car, si tout ce qu'on dit de lui est vrai, il est l'Antéchrist que le Seigneur doit bientôt faire disparaître. Nous défendons que son nom soit nommé dans les Églises, et nous enjoignons à chacun d'effacer son nom des diptyques.

Nous avons maintenant emprisonné Stephanus et Longinus, qui sont les apocrisiaires de Paulus; parce qu'ils l'ont empêché de venir et qu'il n'est pas venu. A cause de cela, nous nous sommes emparé d'eux. De peur que, selon leur coutume, les partisans de Paulus ne disent qu'ils ont été saisis à cause de la foi, il était nécessaire de vous faire savoir que Notre-Seigneur et notre Dieu ne nous permet pas de saisir ou d'emprisonner quelqu'un à cause de la foi. Prends donc soin d'engager Jacques

et Theodorus à monter près de nous. Nous écrivons à Stephanus de leur donner les frais (du voyage).¹⁹

Striking in this important document are the tone of sincerity that the letter exudes and Justin's refusal to be discouraged by what the monks had done to his edict at Callinicum. He knew from the patrician John that the majority that counted, namely, the bishops, had nearly given their assent. That the recipient of the letter was the military commandant of the fortress of Daras in Mesopotamia could raise a question. But Daras had been mentioned before in Michael the Syrian's account of the negotiations that led to the conference, held not at Daras but at Callinicum.²⁰ The ethnic background of the commandant is not Greek but Semitic, either Aramaic or Arab, probably the former.

Important for imperial-federate relations is the fact that the bishop of the Ghassānids was singled out as one of the two bishops with whom Justin wanted to discuss the reconciliation, a reflection of his importance in the perception of the imperial court in Constantinople. Justin had been a Monophysite and was in Constantinople when Theodore and Jacob were consecrated, around 540, by Theodosius; thus he knew that these two were the senior members of the Monophysite hierarchy in Oriens and had been for at least a quarter century. He was also aware that Theodore was the bishop of the influential Ghassānid phylarch, who as recently as 563 had visited Constantinople where he impressed many in the capital, including Justin himself, with his powerful presence. To have the Ghassānid establishment of *foederati* on his side must have seemed to Justin a worthy goal for the achievement of his efforts at reconciliation. Most recently, Justin must have been told by the patrician John that Theodore was very receptive to Justin's edict. Not only did he, with Jacob, show his sympathetic understanding of Justin's position, but he also, together with Jacob, was instrumental in persuading the patrician to try again after his first failure. And in this he was not disappointed, as the sequel to his dispatch of the letter shows. When Jacob did not answer the summons, Theodore did, and went up to see the emperor.

The letter is also remarkable for the virulence of the attack on Paul who, after all, was consecrated patriarch of the City of God. And yet in the official letter of the emperor, he appears as Antichrist and a demon! The most important conclusion that can be drawn from this portion of the letter concerning Paul is that it is a reflection of the ardent desire that consumed Justin II to have Athanasius as his man in Egypt. He had evidently entertained so much

¹⁹ Ibid., 289–90.

²⁰ Ibid., 286. In the Syriac original of Michael, the commandant is called *stratēlatēs*: *Chronique*, II, 289 note 2. This confirms what has been suspected of the rank of the commander at Daras for the period 540–573, that he was no longer *dux* but *magister militum*; see ODB, I, s.v. Dara.

hope in the nomination of Athanasius that the appearance of Paul in Egypt as a rival candidate, and the failure of Justin's design, sent him into a rage, which is clearly expressed in this paragraph. He clearly listened to what Athanasius had to say on the latter's return from Egypt to Constantinople, not having accomplished what he and Justin had hoped. Although Justin expressed some reservation and caution in accepting Athanasius' report, he clearly accepted enough of it to make him write this paragraph, replete with pejoratives.

Interesting is the reference to Paul as the "stammerer" or "stutterer," a pejorative worse than "the black," which stuck to him and by which he is referred to in the literature of the period. Justin also fails to use Paul's ecclesiastical title of patriarch, and so he appears in the letter as "Paul, the stammerer." Thus the letter, in addition to reflecting imperial displeasure concerning Paul, is informative on his stammer, a handicap for an ecclesiastic who was expected to preach from the pulpit.

The most significant element in this paragraph on Paul is the last in which the emperor orders that the name of Paul not be mentioned in the churches of Oriens and that it should be removed from the diptychs. In so ordering, Justin was acting in conformity with the glorious traditions of the house of Justin. His uncle, Justinian, had exercised his Caesaropapism in various ways, most relevantly when he ordered the erasure of the name of Pope Vigilius from the diptychs in 553. Furthermore, Justin had sown the seeds of the future confrontation with the Ghassānids.

The last paragraph in the letter again expresses Justin's anger with Paul by assuring the reader that his imprisonment of the two *apocrisarii* of Paul in Constantinople, Stephanus and Longinus, was not an expression of ill will toward their Monophysite confession, since this would be un-Christian behavior. But this declaration of intention serves another purpose, an assurance to the two bishops, Theodore and Jacob, that they need not fear any violence against them but that a safe conduct is granted them for coming to the capital, with the further assurance that the state would pay for their traveling expenses.

Michael the Syrian notes that the commandant of Daras sent copies of the letter to various parts of Oriens and adds that while Jacob did not respond positively to Justin's order, Theodore did and was received with great honor by the emperor. While Jacob's hands were tied by the monks, Theodore's evidently were not. He obviously answered only to the redoubtable phylarch for whom he was bishop and who was instrumental in having him consecrated some twenty-five years before. Theodore's decision to go to Constantinople was natural. He had assented to the emperor's edict, or almost did so, and worked with Jacob in persuading the patrician John to repeat his attempt at

reconciliation. Thus he could only respond in the affirmative to the letter, replete with such warm and sincere sentiments. Perhaps the fact that Jacob did not respond positively may have strengthened his determination to go alone, since his failure to do so would have meant the rejection of the imperial overture by the entire Monophysite establishment.

Theodore could not have gone to Constantinople without the knowledge and approval of Arethas. The phylarch, as noted earlier, was at this time a man of peace, not war, and was most anxious to serve the cause of Monophysite and Christian unity. He must have received a copy of Justin's letter and must have been impressed by its sincerity. While Arethas might not have liked the paragraph on Paul, the latter had not yet appeared at his court and was still in Egypt or was on his way to Oriens. So he had no way of judging the truth of the accusations leveled against Paul in the letter.

As to the great honor with which Theodore was received by the emperor, this was only natural. Justin was anxious to reestablish contact with the Monophysite hierarchy in Oriens. Paul was out of the question since he had just condemned and excommunicated him, while Jacob tarried in Oriens, held back by the monks. Theodore was consequently the only contact cleric between the Dyophysite world and that of the Monophysites.

C

The sequel to the "excommunication" of Paul by Justin was Paul's "reinstatement" by the Ghassānid phylarch! Michael the Syrian supplies the background in a paragraph in which he explains how, after the exchange of unpleasantries between the rival claimants in Alexandria, Athanasius and Paul, the latter returned after his failure in Egypt to the court of Arethas, who reinstated him. The paragraph contains some important details such as the wealth of Theodosius, which Paul inherited and which he used to promote his candidacy; and how his failure made the Alexandrines also opposed to Jacob for having consecrated him without the consent of all the provinces. In Chabot's translation, it reads as follows.

Ensuite il désira celui d'Alexandrie. Mais les Alexandrins demandaient Athanasius, fils de la fille de l'impératrice Theodora. Paulus écrivit aux Alexandrins des reproches contre Athanasius. Athanasius en ayant eu connaissance se mit à examiner la conduite de Paulus; ensuite les Alexandrins rédigerent un acte d'accusations très odieuses, contre Paulus; et ils les affirmaient en disant qu'il était leur concitoyen. Athanasius les montra lui-même à l'empereur. Paulus chercha à corrompre les Alexandrins par de grands présents, à l'aide des richesses de Theodosius dont il avait hérité. Voyant qu'il n'avançait à rien, il descendit près de Hérét,

fils de Gabala; et celui-ci ordonna que son nom fût proclamé dans les églises des Διακρινομένοι, c'est-à-dire des Orthodoxes. Or, les Alexandrins étaient scandalisés non seulement à cause de Paulus, mais aussi à cause du vénérable Mar Jacques qui l'avait ordonné sans le consentement de toutes les provinces.²¹

The chronology of these events should be reset in the following manner. In the narrative of Michael, the reinstatement of Paul by Arethas comes in the chapter that precedes that on Justin with the edict and letter to the commandant of Daras. But surely the paragraph in which the reinstatement of Paul occurs is posterior in time to that in which Justin excommunicates Paul.²² As Paul did not attend the conference of Callinicum in 567, the presumption is that he was still in Egypt, and so his return must be dated to the end of 567 or the beginning of 568, since shortly after he appears in Constantinople where he takes part in the Tritheistic controversy in the capital.

The question that inevitably arises concerns the motives of Arethas in receiving Paul and directly crossing the will of his emperor by reinstating the one whom the latter had excommunicated. The following may be suggested. Paul was a cleric not unknown to Arethas who, on his visit to Constantinople in 563, had met him, had spoken to him, and had heard the late Theodosius' praise of him. Also, Paul was consecrated by his friend Jacob. So Arethas' loyalties could only lead him to the extension of support to the beleaguered cleric. Athanasius and the Egyptians had *inter alia* raised the question of the canonicity of Paul's consecration and blamed Jacob for having done it without adequate consultation with many of the bishops in Oriens. This charge directly touched Arethas who had approved Theodosius' nomination of Paul and Jacob's consecration of him, and thus had contributed to the successful conclusion of efforts to elevate Paul to the Patriarchate of Antioch. He must have been especially sensitive to the charge of the Egyptians since it involved Jacob, the holy man, whom he ardently admired and venerated. The withdrawal of support from Paul when he was thus attacked would only have been a betrayal of Jacob, and thus his protection of Paul was heartily extended.

Furthermore, the rejection of Paul would have meant the creation of a vacancy in the patriarchal see of Antioch and Oriens, which would have thrown into further disarray the affairs of the Monophysites in this period, a besieged church with no patriarchs in Alexandria, Constantinople, or Jerusalem. Arethas must have read Paul's denunciation of Athanasius, which would

²¹ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 285.

²² The two paragraphs of excommunication and reinstatement are clearly related, but they have not been brought together in discussions of Paul. They are missing in Brooks' article on the patriarch, and Aigrain ("Arabic," col. 1207) refers only to the reinstatement by Arethas, which appears there without its background—Justin's excommunication of Paul.

have appealed to him since Athanasius most probably was attacked by Paul on theological grounds as a Tritheist. Even Paul's desire to acquire the see of Alexandria may have seemed excusable to Arethas. He was an Egyptian, who probably did not feel at home in Oriens: he did not speak Arabic, and his race was even commented upon, as he was regularly described, possibly pejoratively, though erroneously, as Paul the Black.²³

Important in this affair is not Arethas' acceptance of Paul and the latter's residence at his court and camp,²⁴ but the direct affront to the emperor's order when he had the name of Paul reinscribed in the diptychs. This is explicable only by the realization that the phylarch was both a man of deep religious convictions and of great military prestige in Oriens and Constantinople. His reinstatement of Paul in the face of possible violent imperial reaction could only have been a reflection of the combined effect of these two factors. Although Arethas was essentially a soldier, he was not a complete stranger to theological subtleties and canonical propriety; so he must have been encouraged to reinstate Paul also by the realization that Justin's arbitrary act was completely non-canonical and void, since it needed a duly constituted synod to excommunicate a patriarch. His own act could not be described in similar terms. He was only reinstating a patriarch that had been duly consecrated, and thus his support was in a sense a defense of the canonicity of Paul's consecration.

Finally, the reinscription of the name of Paul in the diptychs of the churches raises the question of which churches are meant. It is quite unlikely that those of Oriens or the Patriarchate of Antioch are meant, since Arethas had no jurisdiction over these areas. The chances are that what is meant is Ghassānland,²⁵ the limitrophe in which the *foederati* lived and over which Theodore was made bishop. This, then, becomes a rare reference, as it suggests a flourishing Christian community in Ghassānland, which had its churches and its liturgy in which the name of Paul was restored and so was mentioned during the celebration of the Eucharist.²⁶

²³ On this sobriquet "the Black," see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 195 note 5.

²⁴ Bar-Hebraeus adds to Michael's account one word, a verb, stating that Arethas "received" or "accepted" Paul, and then repeats what Michael had said on the reinstatement; see *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, I, col. 235, line 13, where Syriac *qbaleh* is translated into Latin as *suscepit eum*, in the opposite column.

²⁵ "De son territoire," as perceptively stated by Aigrain in "Arabie," col. 1207.

²⁶ The reference to the diptychs of the Ghassānid churches is the only extant reference—indirect and implicit as it is—to a Ghassānid liturgy celebrated in their churches. There is an echo of this in the Arabic sources, but what the language of this liturgy was remains to be seen; see *BASIC II*.

The reference to the Christian churches in Ghassānland recalls what was said earlier, in Part One, while discussing the Ḥarrān inscription (A.D. 568), which commemorated the erection of a federate Ghassānid church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The inscription must also

A passage in John of Ephesus supplements what Michael the Syrian relates on Paul's taking refuge at the court of Arethas. Although the passage comes in the chapter on his son Mundir, it refers to antecedents that go back to the residence of Paul at Arethas' court. It speaks of the veneration of the *foederati* for Jacob, of Paul's flight to them, his concealment among them during the lifetime of the old king Arethas, and how they were edified by his moderation, gravity, and learning: "Cum igitur omnes catervae Ṭayâyê ab initio beato Iacobo devincti essent, necnon et vivente etiam sene Ḥarīth Paulus illuc ivisset et apud eos celatus esset, et per eum etiam propter moderationem et gravitatem et eius doctrinam aedificati sunt."²⁷

The relevant new datum in this context is that Paul's residence at the court of Arethas was really a concealment. This can easily be related to Justin's letter to the commandant at Daras in which Paul was denounced and excommunicated. He was therefore an outlaw, strictly speaking, and he was clearly aware of the fact, as was the Ghassānid phylarch who gave him refuge and thus concealed him. The passage that enumerates the virtues of Paul that endeared him to the *foederati* and Arethas is relevant and may be added to the factors already discussed that made the phylarch give Paul his protection.

Just as Arethas must have known of Justin's excommunication of Paul, so must Justin have known of Arethas' reinstatement of him, and he must have been deeply offended. But at the time he was happy to have Arethas' bishop in Constantinople as the sole liaison cleric between him and the Monophysites whom he was so anxious to conciliate. He also knew the power and prestige of Arethas, both within the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*, and so must have felt that there was nothing he could do about the latter's reinstatement of Paul. Furthermore, all this took place in the midst of the Tritheistic controversy which had rocked the Monophysite church and which Justin was as anxious to settle as Arethas was. But he also knew that Arethas was very old and that his days were numbered; therefore there was no need to add to the points of friction with the Monophysites by picking a quarrel with the powerful Ghassānid phylarch.

In this contest of wills between the emperor and the phylarch, the latter apparently won. A year or so after the excommunication of Paul by Justin, the

be mentioned here because of its relevance to ecclesiastical history: it commemorates the erection of a *martyrion* and belongs to this *quadrennium* since it is dated 568. In Part One it was argued that the Ghassānids must have built many churches during their long residence in the limitrophe and that the *martyrion* of 568 could not have been an isolated case. Now this reference to the Ghassānid churches in Michael the Syrian, taken together with the Ḥarrān inscription, makes possible the epigraphic-literary confrontation, desirable for speaking of the churches that the Ghassānids erected. For their monasteries, see below, 831-35. For the Ḥarrān inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 325-31.

²⁷ See John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, p. 162, lines 6-9.

former appeared in Constantinople, evidently pardoned by the emperor, since otherwise he would not have dared to make the journey to the capital, where he took part in the Tritheistic controversy. The clear implication of this is that the emperor relented and gave in²⁸ to the wish of the phylarch whose power in Oriens he appreciated and whose prestige he needed in order to close the ranks of the Monophysites and then to reconcile them with the Chalcedonians. This is what he tried to do around 570 in Constantinople when Arethas, too, appeared and presided over the council that tried the two Tritheistic bishops, Eugenius and Conon. There is no more sensitive measure of the power and prestige of the Ghassānid phylarch than his victory in this imperial-phylarchal confrontation.

IV. THE GHASSĀNIDS AND TRITHEISM

The Ghassānids were involved ecclesiastically not only in the theological confrontation with Dyophysite Byzantium but also in dissensions within the Monophysite movement, both doctrinal and other. In the 560s it was the Tritheistic heresy, and the Ghassānids played an important role in dealing with it. Their role has not been fully grasped or discussed in detail, and so this will be attempted here with regard to both Arethas and Theodore.

The fortunes of this heresy center mainly around five figures: Askusnaghes, the master of a school in Constantinople, who was its father; John Philoponos, the Grammarian, of Alexandria, who was its theorist; Athanasius, Theodora's grandson, who was the intermediary that brought Askusnaghes' papers from Constantinople to Philoponos in Alexandria; and Eugenius and Conon, the bishops of Seleucia and Tarsus respectively, who, without accepting all the conclusions of the Aristotelian Philoponos, recognized three *ousiai* in the Trinity as well as three *hypostaseis*. Their Tritheism ran contrary to the official Monophysite view of the Trinity promulgated before his death by Patriarch Theodosius in his *Oratio de Trinitate*.²⁹ Although the heresy appeared in the late 550s, it was only in the 560s, especially the latter half, that it

²⁸ Presumably after some correspondence between Jābiya and Constantinople. The phylarch must have written to the emperor, whom he had known before the latter became emperor, and must have convinced him of Paul's innocence of the accusations against him; he may even have sent him Paul's statement on Athanasius, which the emperor would not have seen before.

Arethas wrote a letter in 563 to Jacob which has been analyzed in the previous chapter. So it is possible that he did so on this occasion, too; but if so, the letter has not been preserved. The survival of the other letter suggests that many documents recording the history of Arab-Byzantine relations have been lost, since it is unlikely that the letter written in 563, so late in his reign, was the only one he wrote during his long and eventful career.

²⁹ For Tritheism, see Devreesse, *PA*, 77-94; Honigmann, *Évêques*, 179-88. For Askusnaghes, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 251-54; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 223-26. The orthography as well as the etymology of "Askusnaghes" is far from certain; see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 179 note 3. Seleucia, the see of Bishop Eugenius, was Seleucia in Isauria.

flared up. Against the two firebrands, Eugenius and Conon, were pitted the two ranking hierarchs of the Monophysite movement, Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore. The involvement of the bishop of the Ghassānids naturally drew the Ghassānid phylarch into the theological battle.

Many conferences were convened from 567 to 570 in order to wean away the two dissenting bishops from their heretical views on the Trinity: (1) in Egypt and at the Palace of Hormisdas in Constantinople in 567; (2) at the monastery of Sts. Cyrrhus and Zakkai at Callinicum, also in 567; (3) at the monastery of Mar Bassus in Bethabo in Cilicia in May 567 and in January 568; (4) at Garbdiso in the winter of 568/69; (5) and finally at the conference in Constantinople, 569/70, at which the two bishops were excommunicated.³⁰

Two Syriac sources document the role of the Ghassānids, king and bishop, in these theological controversies: the primary Monophysite documents, published by Father Chabot, and the late *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian. In view of the paucity of the sources on the important role of the Ghassānids in ecclesiastical history, the passages pertaining to them are assembled here and analyzed. They give a much clearer picture of the Ghassānids than has been available thus far.

Theodore

Theodore's presence or involvement in these conferences and the negotiations with the Tritheists are fully documented in the two sources, which complement each other. In both, especially in the *Documenta Monophysitarum*,³¹ Theodore and Jacob either write the letters about the controversy or receive letters concerning it. Theodore's name always comes after that of Jacob. Other bishops are sometimes included, but they come after the two ranking bishops, Jacob and Theodore. These letters may be listed as follows.

1. Letter of the Monophysite bishops in Constantinople addressed to Jacob and Theodore and other bishops in Oriens.³²
2. Letter addressed by Jacob and Theodore alone to the monks of Oriens.³³
3. Letter written by the archimandrites of Oriens in which reference is

³⁰ For these conferences and their dates, see Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1208 and Honigmann, *Évêques*, 184–85. Garbdiso, an unknown locality when Aigrain wrote, has been identified by Honigmann as 'RBDS, *ibid.*, 185 note 4. It is not clear whether the final conference of Constantinople, at which the two bishops were excommunicated and in which the Ghassānid phylarch participated according to Michael the Syrian (*Chronique*, II, 256), was the same one over which the patriarch of Constantinople, John Scholasticus, presided as arbitrator (*ibid.*, 258). In Michael's narrative they appear as two separate conferences, one following the other, and so apparently they do in John of Ephesus, for which see *HE*, V.3.

³¹ Hereafter *Documenta*, followed by page and line numbers. The Latin version will be cited, unless otherwise noted.

³² *Ibid.*, 101.

³³ *Ibid.*, 115.

made to the two bishops, Jacob and Theodore, who had written against Tritheism.³⁴

4. Letter addressed by the archimandrites of Oriens to Jacob. Although it is addressed only to Jacob, mention is made of Theodore, in conjunction with Jacob, toward the end of the letter.³⁵

5. Letter addressed by Patriarch Paul of Antioch to Jacob and Theodore.³⁶

6. Letter addressed by Jacob and Theodore to Paul, patriarch of Antioch.³⁷

In addition to these letters, there are two others that were written after the final conference that excommunicated Eugenius and Conon.

7. Letter written by various Monophysite bishops to the Monophysites of the various provinces. At the head of the list of senders are Jacob and Theodore.³⁸

8. Letter written by various Monophysite bishops to the clerics and the faithful people of the Provincia Arabia. Again at the head of the list appear the names of Jacob and Theodore.³⁹

These last two letters are distinguished from the rest by their length, the identity of their addressees, and above all by their reference to the Ghassānid king, who took an active part in this last conference in Constantinople.

9. Finally, there is the important letter written by the archimandrites of the Provincia Arabia to the Monophysite bishops in answer to their letter. And at the head of the list of addressees are the names of Jacob and Theodore.⁴⁰

These letters speak for themselves in reflecting the role played by Theodore in the Tritheistic controversy. It is noteworthy that Jacob and Theodore take precedence in this over the patriarch of Antioch, Paul, who cuts a very minor figure in a matter that should have been very much his business, but he was living under a cloud.

In addition to the evidence from the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, there is evidence from the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, which complements the *Documenta* in providing many precious details. The preceding section on Arethas has treated the role of Theodore in the conference of Callinicum. But that, too, apparently dealt not only with Dyophysite-Monophysite reconciliation but also with the Tritheistic controversy. As has been noted by Aigrain,⁴¹ the *Documenta Monophysitarum* give an account that suggests that Tritheism

³⁴ Ibid., p. 116, lines 29, 33–34; p. 117, line 8.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 123, line 12.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 123, lines 31, 33.

³⁷ Ibid., 125.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 136, line 18; p. 139, lines 12–13; p. 142, lines 2–3.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 142, line 22.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 145, line 25. These three letters will be commented upon later in this chapter.

⁴¹ See "Arabie," col. 1212.

was the main issue of the Monophysite world, while the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian gives an account, for instance, of the conference of Callinicum which emphasizes the Dyophysite-Monophysite confrontation. But as he himself has suggested, the two works are written from two different perspectives. Thus the *Chronicle* of Michael provides important details on Theodore at Callinicum, not to be found in the *Documenta*.

Equally, if not more important, is the role of Theodore in the final conference at Constantinople where he appears both as a negotiator and an excommunicator. While Jacob was dealing with Eugenius at Arabdis,⁴² where he excommunicated the heretical bishop after the latter's refusal to renounce his heretical views, Theodore negotiated with the other bishop, Conon, in Constantinople.⁴³ At the final encounter, he serves him an ultimatum to the effect that if he did not renounce his heretical views on Tritheism, he would be excommunicated. Conon refused, and Theodore excommunicated him. The passage from Michael's *Chronicle* is worth quoting in Chabot's translation.

Le bienheureux Theodorus compagnon de Jacques, étant monté à la ville impériale, Conon se rendit près de lui avec ses partisans. Theodorus l'interrogea sur cette opinion. Comme Conon ne répondit pas, Theodorus lui dit: "Si vous n'anathématisez pas quiconque parle d'un nombre de natures et d'essences dans la Trinité, qui n'admet de nombre que dans les personnes, dans les noms, et dans les propriétés, l'essence et la nature restant en dehors de tout nombre: vous êtes étrangers à l'Église." Et ainsi celui-ci les anathématisa également.

Tous les deux furent donc destitués du sacerdoce: l'un à Arabdis, l'autre dans la ville impériale, par les deux pontifes.⁴⁴

The role of Theodore in Constantinople is reminiscent of that of another Arab cleric at the Council of Ephesus in 431. At that ecumenical council, it was the Arab Aspebetos, phylarch turned bishop, who negotiated with Nestorius before the latter was excommunicated by the council.⁴⁵

Arethas

The role of Arethas in the Tritheistic controversy is reflected, as that of his bishop Theodore was, in the *Documenta Monophysitarum* and in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, and with remarkable specificity. Two of the letters contained in the *Documenta*, included in the list of letters involving Theodore, record his services to the Monophysite cause in the course of this controversy.

⁴² Arabdis is in the region of Mar'ash (Germanicia), twenty miles from Doliche and twenty-eight from Nicopolis; Honigmann, *Évêques*, 185 note 4; see also above, note 30.

⁴³ Further on the conference in Constantinople, see below, 814–21.

⁴⁴ *Chronique*, II, 256–57.

⁴⁵ See *BAFIC*, 183.

The First Letter

The first letter is written by the leading Monophysite bishops who negotiated with Eugenius and Conon, at the head of whom were Jacob and Theodore.⁴⁶ It is addressed to the Monophysites of the various provinces of Oriens, informing them of the negotiations they had conducted for three years with the two bishops, the failure of these negotiations, and the fact that they decided to excommunicate them. Within the letter is inserted another, an encyclical,⁴⁷ that the bishops sent to Eugenius and Conon, which contained both an account of the efforts of the bishops to conciliate the two dissenters and an ultimatum to recant within three days of the receipt of the letter or face excommunication. Thus the main letter, a primary document of the first order, is a mine of information on this phase in the history of the Tritheistic heresy, as is the second. Both deserve to be commented on in detail. As the letter within the letter, the encyclical, is chronologically anterior to the main letter addressed to the Monophysites of the provinces, it will be treated first. There are in it four explicit references to Arethas and two implicit ones.

1. After the failure of negotiations both in Constantinople and at Callinicum, Arethas invited Jacob and Theodore and with them Patriarch Paul to come to Arabia when they jointly wrote a letter to the two dissenting bishops: "Rursum autem, postquam gloriosus patricius Hareth in Arabiam vocavit nos et sanctum beatumque patriarcham nostrum Mar Paulum, epistolam communem fecimus, ego et venerabilis Mar Theodorus, et scripsimus ad fraternitatem vestram, rogantes ut omnis contentio et inimicitia e medio tolleretur."⁴⁸ The invitation extended by Arethas to the three ecclesiastics to come to him in Arabia reflects the genuine concern of the Ghassānid king and his continuing interest in the welfare of his church even at this advanced stage in his career; he died shortly after.

The implication of the invitation to come to Arabia is that Arethas had not attended the earlier conferences in Constantinople and Callinicum and that after the disappointing news that these were not successful, he wanted to supervise the conduct of these negotiations personally at his own headquarters. Furthermore, a letter written from his headquarters to the two bishops would be endowed with the prestige of his position as *fidei defensor* of the Monophysite church, a fact well known to Eugenius and Conon. But as it turned out, the two bishops were not impressed.

Where in Arabia the three ecclesiastics met with Arethas is not stated, but the rendezvous could have been either Jābiya in Palaestina Secunda or Dārāyā in Phoenicia Libanensis. Although, strictly speaking, neither was in

⁴⁶ See *Documenta*, 136–41; textus, pp. 196–204.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, versio, p. 138, line 4–p. 140, line 31.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139, lines 10–14.

Arabia, yet the sphere of Arethas' immediate influence comprised these neighboring regions, these two provinces contiguous with Arabia, as can easily be seen from the letter addressed by the archimandrites of Arabia to Jacob and Theodore, but which includes signatures from these two places and others in these two provinces.⁴⁹ The more famous seat of the Ghassānids was Jābiya, and the meeting probably took place there.

It is noteworthy that Arethas invited not only Jacob and Theodore but also Paul, who was dwarfed in the conduct of this controversy by the first two, in spite of the fact that he was the ranking Monophysite in Oriens, since he was the head of the Patriarchate of Antioch. This reflects both Arethas' considerateness and sensitivity to ecclesiastical decorum and also his loyalty to the prelate he had supported for consecration and later protected from imperial inclemency when he came back from Egypt, rejected by the Monophysites of that province.

It is significant and understandable in a document such as this letter that Arethas should have been referred to not by his Arab titles but by those that the Christian Roman Empire had conferred on him. The military title, *phylarch*, does not appear, but only that of *patricius* and also *gloriosus*, in Syriac, *shbīhā*.⁵⁰

The letter, written at and sent from Arethas' headquarters in Arabia, brings to mind another, more famous letter, also sent from the Ghassānid headquarters in Jābiya, sent by another Monophysite cleric, Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, around 520 concerning the martyrs of Najrān in South Arabia.⁵¹

2. After the failure of all efforts to bring the two bishops to the straight path of Monophysite orthodoxy, Jacob and his fellow bishops write their ultimatum and ask Arethas to hand it to them in person: "In fine autem omnium, cum epistolam encyclicam fecissemus, quae aberrationem huius haeresis denudavit, rogavimus eos, per christophilum et gloriosum patricium Hareth et, qui cum eo erant, viros pios et illustres, ut huic subscriberent."⁵² The scene now shifts to Constantinople, as will be argued later,⁵³ whither Arethas had traveled for the final encounter and showdown with the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon, three years after the failure of all negotiations. Noteworthy is the fact that the final and crucial phase of the negotiations is entrusted to Arethas, namely, to hand in the ultimatum and persuade the two bishops. His titles are again the Byzantine titles that ally him to the Christian Roman Empire rather than to Arabia. To the titles of the first reference to him in the encyclical is now added the appropriately religious title, *Christophilos*.

⁴⁹ For this letter, see below, 821–24.

⁵⁰ See *Documenta*, textus, p. 199, line 29.

⁵¹ See *Martyrs*, 63.

⁵² *Documenta*, p. 137, lines 30–33.

⁵³ See below, 814–21.

Also noteworthy is that Arethas was not alone in representing the Ghassānid *Basileia* and phylarchate. He was accompanied by others who are described as “*viros pios et illustres*.”⁵⁴ Most probably these were distinguished phylarchs, including his son and successor, Munḍir, for whose sake he had made his penultimate journey to Constantinople in 563 for insuring his succession to the phylarchate after his death.⁵⁵ To have had Munḍir with him was consonant with his circumspect plans for the continuation of his policies after his death. Just as he had insured in 563 the succession of Munḍir in the political and military spheres, he is now concerned that his successor should be thoroughly familiar with his future duties as protector of the Monophysite church, which in fact he became. The Byzantine title applied to these men around Arethas is appropriately not the same as that applied to Arethas (*gloriosus*) but *illustris*.

3. The mediation of Arethas and those with him is again referred to twice in the letter. The bishops reiterate accounts of their efforts to win over peacefully the two dissenting bishops by various means, among which was the personal intervention of Arethas and those close to him: “*Et per epistulas et per personas religiosas et fideles saepius et per ipsum gloriosum patricium Hareth virosque cum eo erant illustres et honoratos, suasimus, monuimus, culpavimus.*”⁵⁶ The passage separates the letters sent to the two bishops from the persons who carried weight, and in the second category is placed Arethas. The titles applied to Arethas and his party are the same as in the previous passage just analyzed but with the addition of another one that describes those with him, namely, *honoratos*.⁵⁷ This may be a literary locution and not a technical term reflecting a Byzantine title or rank, unlike the preceding one, which is.

The bishops finally pronounce the excommunication of the two dissenting bishops after all efforts to conciliate them had failed, including the mediation and intervention of Arethas and his party: “*Neque de intercessione memorati gloriosi patricii et virorum illustrium qui cum eo erant curam haberunt.*”⁵⁸ The use of the term *memoratus*, Syriac *et'hed*, raises a question. The term can mean “the above-mentioned” or “the commemorated/remembered.”

⁵⁴ The Syriac terms for *pius* and *illustris* are *rābēm alāhā* and *pē-b'-rabbūthā*; *Documenta*, textus, p. 198, line 2. The title translated *illustris* in the Latin version is more accurately Greek *μεγαλοπρεπέστατος*, for which see the present writer in “The Patriciate of Arethas,” *BZ* 52 (1959), 336.

⁵⁵ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 282–88.

⁵⁶ *Documenta*, p. 140, line 34–p. 141, line 1.

⁵⁷ Syriac *myāqrā*, “honorable, honored, venerable”; plural *myāqrē*; *ibid.*, textus, p. 202, line 18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141, lines 11–12. The term that describes his party is *myāqrē* in Syriac, “honorable,” for which the Latin version has *illustres*. Chabot thus used *illustres* to translate two different Syriac terms; besides, *illustris* is a technical term in the Byzantine hierarchy of ranks and titles, for which, see the present writer in *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient*, no. III, pp. 326–28.

If the latter,⁵⁹ this could imply that Arethas died shortly after he delivered the ultimatum, and he did die about this time. The fact, however, that he is not mentioned by name in this passage could suggest that *memoratus* is used in the sense of "the above-mentioned," but this is not consonant with the reverential tone that pervades reference to him in the letter.

In addition to these explicit references, there are two implicit ones. The first occurs in the encyclical addressed to the two bishops, and the second in the letter addressed to the Monophysites of the provinces.

1. After the letter written by Jacob and Theodore from Arabia was sent to the two dissenting bishops, the encyclical states that these two were entreated to restore the peace and unity of the church, especially as this was the great desire of "our most pious and Christ-loving emperors": "Eo magis quod piissimis et christophilis imperatoribus nostris in votis et magno desiderio haec erant."⁶⁰ The use of the term *imperatores*, Syriac *malkēn*, kings in the plural, is most noteworthy. One of them is certainly known—Arethas, who desired this reconciliation. He is now referred to as king, which in fact he was, especially after the *Basileia* of 529. But who is the other king or kings referred to? The writers were Monophysites, and so Monophysite kings come to mind. But there were only three other Monophysite kings—in South Arabia, Ethiopia, and Nubia. These, however, were very distant from the scene and are unlikely to have been directly involved in the controversy, with the possible exception of the king of Nubia,⁶¹ the bishop of which, Longinus, was one of three signatories to this letter.⁶² Then there was Abū Karib, Arethas' brother, who was referred to as king in a Syriac Monophysite document. Although the referent in that document may have been an Abū Karib other than Arethas' brother,⁶³ there is the fact that after about 540 there is no extant source that refers to him, and so he may not have been alive in 570 when this letter was written. Besides, he is never mentioned in these documents. It is practically certain that Justin II is meant, a former Monophysite himself, who took a keen interest in the controversy and worked hard to bring the two

⁵⁹ It is so used a few lines before when applied to the Monophysite patriarch, Theodosius, who had died a few years earlier in 566; see *Documenta*, textus, p. 202, line 25. If *memoratus* turns out to mean "the late, the commemorated," it can be related to the fact that in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia to Jacob and Theodore, to be discussed below, there is no reference to Arethas but to his son Mundir, who succeeded him in 569 or 570 immediately after his death. Everything depends on how the word is vocalized; only the consonantal skeleton is given in the Syriac text, and this can be vocalized *et'bed* (*memoratus*) or *et'abad* (*commemoratus*).

⁶⁰ *Documenta*, p. 139, lines 17–18; textus, p. 200, lines 6–8.

⁶¹ For Nubia and its Christianization in this period, see Frend, *Rise*, 297–303.

⁶² *Documenta*, versio, p. 136, line 19 and note 8.

⁶³ On this see Nöldeke, *GF*, 26–27; but also below, 845–50.

parties together in Constantinople,⁶⁴ as is clear from the testimony of John of Ephesus himself, who witnessed these events in the capital.

It is also noteworthy that the document refers to Justin and Arethas not by their titles, such as *autokrator* for Justin or phylarch for Arethas, but by the title "king." This was, of course, the convenient term to use since it was common to both of them, and thus the two rulers could be referred to by one word. The employment of one and the same term to refer to Arethas and Justin II thus puts the two on the same level. This was an exaggeration since the federate king was far less important than the Byzantine *Basileus* and in fact was his vassal of some sort, but this is the Monophysite perspective on events. For the Monophysite bishops, Arethas was their king more than Justin II, and was also their protector. The use of the word "our" in "our kings" is the explicit statement on the image of the Ghassānid king in the perception of the Monophysite church. He was king of the Ghassānid Arabs, the *foederati* of Byzantium, but he was also the king of the Monophysite church in the perception of its clerics.⁶⁵

Finally, the term *Christophilus* is applied to these kings. This is noteworthy, especially when contrasted with the term *Theophilus* applied to the members of the party around Arethas.⁶⁶ The two rulers are distinguished from their subjects, distinguished as these also were, by this title, and this was, of course, the official title of the emperor, an element in his imperial titulature; and so it was apparently applied to Arethas in Monophysite church documents. *Christophilus* may thus be added to the titles of Arethas, coming as it does in this official ecclesiastical document.⁶⁷

2. The second implicit reference confirms this conclusion. In the letter addressed to the Monophysites of the provinces, these are asked to sever their relations with the heretical bishops and consider them excommunicated and outside the orthodox Monophysite church; and they exhort the Monophysites of the provinces to remain true to the straight path of orthodox Monophysitism. They add that it is the anxious care and the prayers of the kings that there be a union and that the churches of God be united: "Sollicitudo enim et oratio misericordium imperatorum nostrorum ad id spectat ut mutam

⁶⁴ See above, 794–96.

⁶⁵ Chabor's translation of the Syriac *malkēn* ("kings") as *imperatores* is unfortunate, since this obscures the fact that one of the referents was Arethas, who was certainly not an *imperator*. The literal translation of *malkēn* by "kings" would have been accurate and not misleading, since Justin was *basileus* in common parlance, although his official title was *autokrator*, and not misleading in excluding Arethas, who was even more involved than Justin in the Tritheistic heresy.

⁶⁶ The Syriac for *viros pios* in the passage quoted above (*Documenta*, p. 137, line 33; textus, p. 198, line 2) is *rāhem* or *rāhmai Alāhā*, "God-loving, Theophilus," a general term and not a technical term.

⁶⁷ On the titles of Arethas, see "Patriciate of Arethas," 321–42.

unionem iniremus et opportunitas detur unioni prefectae omnium ecclesiarum sanctarum Dei."⁶⁸ The use of the plural in "all the holy churches of God" clearly suggests the two doctrinal persuasions—the Dyophysites and the Monophysites. The plural was also used in an earlier passage in the letter, "unio catholica sanctarum Dei ecclesiarum,"⁶⁹ in the same passage that spoke of "our rulers," "kings," analyzed previously. So the kings referred to in this passage must have been Justin II and Arethas.⁷⁰

The Second Letter

The second letter was written by the same ecclesiastics who wrote the preceding one, and at the head of the subscriptions are the two names of Jacob and Theodore.⁷¹ Unlike the first letter, it is addressed not to the various provinces but to one, Arabia; its message, however, is the same as the first. Unlike the first, the encyclical is not inserted in it but apparently was attached to it separately. Like the preceding one, this letter is a mine of information. Although it says roughly what the first had said, it is differently and significantly nuanced and brings out even more clearly the role of Arethas in the Tritheistic controversy. The following passages may be recovered from the letter as they pertain to the role of the Ghassānid king.

A

1. The letter refers to the efforts of the bishops toward reclaiming the two rebellious bishops from the path of error to that of orthodoxy. In this context, the services of Arethas were enlisted as he was entrusted with delivering this letter with his own hands to the two dissenting bishops: "Quae etiam missa est glorioso et fideli patricio Hareth, ut ipse propria manu eam eis traderet."⁷² The statement on Arethas is a valuable addition to what the first letter says. As is clear from this letter, Arethas was asked twice to hand communications from the bishops to Eugenius and Conon. This is the first communication. It is clearly not the encyclical referred to in the preceding letter since the encyclical is mentioned later on in this letter and is described by the word *apologia* ("defense"), Syriac *mappaq brûhâ*, while this communication is described as an *epistula*, Syriac *egartâ*.⁷³

On what occasion did Arethas deliver this *epistula* (*egartâ*) with his own

⁶⁸ *Documenta*, p. 141, lines 28–31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139, lines 15–16.

⁷⁰ It is possible that the plural "kings" included Mundîr, Arethas' son and successor. It is in this very same period, shortly after the excommunication, that Arethas died and was succeeded by Mundîr, who shared his father's views on reconciliation and who, as has been suggested, attended the conference of Constantinople.

⁷¹ *Documenta*, versio, 142–45; textus, 204–9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, versio, p. 142, lines 34–35; textus, p. 205, lines 13–15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, versio, p. 142, line 32 for *epistula*, and p. 143, lines 7, 26, 30, 35 for *apologia*.

hands? The answer is most probably provided by the preceding letter which tells how, after the failure of negotiations in Constantinople and Callinicum, Arethas invited Jacob and Theodore together with Patriarch Paul to come to him in the Provincia Arabia and discuss the matter there. Thus this letter amplifies what had been briefly told in the last letter, which omits the fact that Arethas was asked to deliver the letter in person.

2. The letter then expands on the antecedents of the encyclical referred to in the last letter: how it was carefully composed by the bishops of Oriens, sent to those in Constantinople, returned to Oriens, and subscribed to by all orthodox Monophysite bishops. Again it was Arethas who delivers the encyclical to Eugenius and Conon. He asks the bishops to come to him, those who lived in Constantinople and also the two dissenters themselves, Eugenius and Conon, and gives them three days to make up their minds whether or not to subscribe to the *apologia*.

Et post haec, praedictus laudatissimus patricius Hareth, vocavit apud se quosdam patres nostros, ex eis qui habitant urbem regiam. Et non nos tantum, sed et Cononem et Eugenium; et tradiderunt utrique, id est Cononi et Eugenio, epistolam ad eos spectantem a nobis episcopis Orientalibus illi patricio missam, cum subscriptionibus nostris, in qua praestituti sunt tres dies ut subscriberent vel non subscriberent.⁷⁴

Arethas is again referred to as *patricius*, but instead of *šbḇḥā*⁷⁵ (*gloriosus*), he is referred to as *saggī qullāsā*, Syriac for πανεύφημος rather than *laudatissimus* as in the Latin version. The Greek term πανεύφημος is attested in Greek for the Ghassānids.⁷⁶ *Praedictus* translates Syriac *amīr*, “the above-mentioned,” and unlike *et’hed* (*memoratus*) in the preceding letter, it can in this context mean only “the above-mentioned.” If *memoratus* turns out to have the meaning “the late,” then this letter to Arabia must have been written before the preceding one, and Arethas would have died in the meantime.

The passage raises the question of the venue for this encounter. As has been observed before, it was possibly in Constantinople itself. In the preceding letter, Arethas invites the parties to meet him in Arabia, which is explicitly referred to. No specific locality is mentioned, and this leaves open the question of whether it was in Constantinople or in Arabia. The clause that describes the bishops of Constantinople, “qui habitant urbem regiam,” is equally ambiguous. It could imply that the venue was either Constantinople or Arabia.

3. After the two bishops read the encyclical, handed to them by Arethas,

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, versio, p. 143, lines 18–25; textus, p. 206, lines 8–15.

⁷⁵ For *saggī qullāsā* as the equivalent of πανεύφημος, see “Patriciate of Arethas,” 335–37.

⁷⁶ See *BASIC* I.1, 496, 518.

the latter asked them about the doctrinal correctness of the *apologia*. After they answered in the affirmative and after an altercation ensued, Arethas finally asked them to subscribe, as the other bishops had done, to the *apologia* and remain in communion with them.

Dixit eis christophilus patricius Hareth: "Dicite mihi num recte se habeat haec apologia?" Cum autem illi dixissent optime se habere, et postquam multa verba inter eos agitata sunt, comminatoria simul et persuasoria, secundum admonitionem apostolicam quae dicit: "Argue, increpa, hortare," in fine dixit eis: "Itaque, sicut ceteri omnes venerabiles episcopi, et vos subscribite, atque communionem cum illis servate."⁷⁷

The titles of Arethas are *patricius*, which always appears, but instead of *saggī qullāsā* of the preceding passage there occurs here *Christophilus*, which, as observed before, was an element in the official titlature of the Byzantine king and probably of Arethas. A few lines before the beginning of the passage quoted here, there appears another title for Arethas, *eius Excellentia*,⁷⁸ which, it has been argued elsewhere,⁷⁹ is the equivalent of Syriac *m'yatrūthā*⁸⁰ and is correctly translated as *Excellentia*. Like *saggī qullāsā*, in the preceding passage, it is a *hapax legomenon* in the extant sources when applied to Arethas.

Again it is the Ghassānid king who delivers the ultimatum to the two dissenters in the hope that his prestige might persuade them. His words are quoted as *oratio recta* and, in their conciseness, reflect the military cast of mind.

4. The two bishops persisted in their Tritheistic position and asked for a postponement of five days in addition to the three, during which they would reflect on the *apologia*. They were granted this extension by the bishops⁸¹ who lived in Constantinople, "a nobis, episcopis Constantinopoli degentibus." When the period of five days elapsed, the two were called, but again they would not give in to the bishops or to Arethas and his party and refused to subscribe to the *apologia* after all these discussions. Consequently they were excommunicated.

Elapso itaque praestituto tempore quinque dierum a nobis eis concesso, rursum vocati sunt et pluribus admoniti, tum a nobis, tum ab aliis viris magnis et fidelibus, ut communi apologiae fidei subscriberent, sed nullo modo consenserunt, spe suae vitae omnino amissa. Cum itaque omnimode a nobis et a viris aliis multis, laudabilibus et fidelibus, ut dictum

⁷⁷ *Documenta*, p. 143, line 34–p. 144, line 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143, line 28.

⁷⁹ See "Patriciate of Arethas," 337.

⁸⁰ *Documenta*, textus, p. 206, line 20.

⁸¹ Not by Arethas, as is clearly stated in the letter; cf. Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1208.

est, sanarentur et sanari noluisent. . . . Et sic itaque ad eorum turpem depositionem processimus.⁸²

As Arethas and his group were already mentioned explicitly more than once in the letter, they are in this paragraph referred to only in general terms, presumably for stylistic reasons. But they are clearly the ones referred to in the phrases "aliis viris magnis et fidelibus" and "viris aliis multis, laudabilibus et fidelibus,"⁸³ since they are placed in contrast to the ecclesiastics who wrote this letter. Thus Arethas and his group represent the secular arm of the Monophysites who took part in the conference. The double reference to Arethas and his party indicates that they persisted to the very end in their attempt to persuade the two bishops to retract their heretical views.

The two phrases are informative on the party of Arethas who, of course, remains in the background, but they are not mentioned by name. They are *fideles* to Monophysitism, and they are *magni* and *multi* ("great and many"). This suggests that Arethas brought with him to the conference some important personages among his federate Ghassānids, distinguished phylarchs including probably his own son and successor, Mundir.⁸⁴ If so, the phrase would document the fact that not only Arethas felt strongly about ecclesiastical matters of faith but also the phylarchs under him, a fact already noted when the Ḥarrān inscription of one of the phylarchs was discussed which commemorated the erection of a *martyrion* dedicated to St. John.⁸⁵ It also throws light on an important statement in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian which provides important supplemental information on this conference.

B

One of the passages in the *Chronicle* describes the role of Arethas in the final phase of these negotiations with the two Tritheistic bishops, Eugenius and Conon. Quotations from his discourse are cited verbatim, and these supplement what the *Documenta Monophysitarum* have preserved of what he actually said in this final phase. The passage reads as follows in the French translation of Chabot.

Ḥéret, roi de Ṭaiyayê, monta vers l'empereur avec des lettres de Jacques et des Orientaux (disant): "La Trinité est une divinité, une nature, une essence; celui qui ne signera pas cette lettre doit être anathématisé." Sept évêques et le patriarche signèrent. Conon et Eugène dirent: "Nous ne signerons pas, nous combattrons ces (lettres)." Alors Ḥéret dit: "Je sais

⁸² *Documenta*, p. 144, lines 12–23.

⁸³ Cf. the two clear references to Arethas' party in the preceding letter.

⁸⁴ As he did in 563; see *BASIC* I.1, 282–84.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, 325–31.

maintenant que vous êtes hérétiques. Nous et nos armées, nous acceptons ces choses, ainsi que Jacques et les Orientaux."⁸⁶

Noteworthy is the fact that most of the passage is in *oratio recta*, and this suggests strongly that Michael had drawn on a primary source other than the *Documenta Monophysitarum*. Naturally there would have been such other documents since the conference lasted for several days, and only a few words of Arethas are preserved in the *Documenta*. The passage reveals Arethas as a "theologian," and this is the second time that Michael presents Arethas in this light, the first being the equally precious passage in which he argued with Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, who tried to win him over to the Chalcedonian position.⁸⁷ There Arethas spoke of *Quaternitas*, and now he speaks of *Trinitas Deorum*.⁸⁸ Thus the phylarch emerges, contrary to the commonly held view, not as a rude soldier but as an informed Christian who could use, at least in a simple manner, the theological terms of the controversy.

Striking is the statement on his armies: that they, his armies, accept the doctrines enunciated in the encyclical. This is positive evidence that involves not only the chief federate phylarch but also the armies of the Ghassānid federates in theological controversies, a fact supported also in various other ways.⁸⁹ This statement may be brought together with those in the *Documenta* just analyzed, on the party that accompanied Arethas, where it was suggested that those around him were distinguished phylarchs of the various provinces whom he had brought along with him to the conference in order to give support to the encyclical by their presence.

One of the most important sentences in the passage is the one that opens it, namely, that Arethas went to Constantinople for the final phase of the confrontation with the two dissenting bishops.⁹⁰ The venue is not clear in the *Documenta*, with statements that are ambiguous and oscillate between Arabia and Constantinople.

In favor of the view that this last phase of the confrontation at which Arethas presided was held in Constantinople, the following may be adduced. There is first the statement in Michael the Syrian that has just been men-

⁸⁶ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 256.

⁸⁷ See above, 746-55.

⁸⁸ For the phrase, see *Documenta*, p. 137, line 10; see also *ibid.*, p. 145, line 17.

⁸⁹ It is noteworthy that the text speaks of armies in the plural, which in this case means the various groups of troops under the various phylarchs in Oriens. These apparently were well informed about the controversy and other theological matters, and it is natural to suppose that each group had its priest, a chaplain assigned to it.

⁹⁰ Chabot confuses this with the well-known journey recorded by Theophanes in 563. The final phase of the encounter with the two bishops was certainly not in 563. Devreesse implies from his reference to Eugenius and Conon (last paragraph in *PA*, 85) that the conference was not held in Constantinople. Honigmann (*Évêques*, 185) is the only one who states that it was held there.

tioned. It comes in a paragraph that derives from a document and so is not likely to be a confused account of some other journey that Arethas made to Constantinople. Also, considering the importance of the final encyclical, which carried with it the threat of excommunication, and that Justin II was deeply interested in this, it is natural to suppose that Constantinople was the obvious choice for the venue.

Furthermore, the statement in the second letter that Arethas invited the participants to come to him does not specifically state the place to which he invited them, but a similar statement for a previous conference in the first letter specifies it was Arabia. Thus it can be argued that if it had been Arabia, the province would have been mentioned. This is corroborated by the fact that he invited bishops who lived in Constantinople. These same Monophysite bishops who lived in Constantinople⁹¹ are referred to again as the ones who gave the bishops five more days of grace. The natural presumption is that the scene of all this is Constantinople.

In their reply to this letter, the archimandrites of Arabia also speak of the long distance that separates them from the bishops who sent them the letter.⁹² This suggests a place very far from Arabia such as Constantinople, rather than one in Oriens. Finally, and this is decisive, there is the statement in the *HE* of John of Ephesus who was a contemporary of these events, signed this letter, and lived in Constantinople. Of the two bishops, he says that after being anathematized, they stayed on in Constantinople, "postquam anathematizati sunt in urbe regia permanserunt."⁹³

Thus the conclusion that may be drawn from all this is that the conference was indeed held in Constantinople and that Arethas did make the journey around 570 to the capital, since his presence at the final phase and encounter with the two bishops is attested in both the *Documenta* and the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian. He must have been very committed to have made a journey of at least three months' duration at this stage in his life when he was some seventy years old. Shortly after, he died, and the journey possibly affected his health adversely. But it is evidence of the fact that he cared so much for the welfare of his church that he was prepared to undertake such an arduous journey at his advanced age.

C

The two letters of the *Documenta* and the account in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian have demonstrated the significant place that Arethas had

⁹¹ *Documenta*, p. 144, line 6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 146, lines 8–9.

⁹³ John of Ephesus, *HE*, V.3, p. 193, lines 3–4. Nöldeke was of the view that Arethas did go to Constantinople for the final encounter with the Tritheists; see his "Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascenischen Gebietes und der Haurangegend," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 419.

in the history of the Tritheistic heresy. In addition to their value as documents for Arethas, their contents raise some other questions.

1. The Monophysite bishops wrote letters to the various provinces, and a copy of that letter has survived, the first long letter. Yet they seem to have singled out the Provincia Arabia for special attention since the letter to Arabia is not an exact copy of the one to the other provinces. It is distinguished from the letters to the other provinces by the elaboration of paragraphs on Arethas. This is the key to understanding why Arabia was so privileged. It was the province of the protagonist in this drama, Arethas, and so it was natural that the letter to his province should be so written. It was also the province of Theodore, one of the two ranking hierarchs who dealt with the Tritheistic heresy. Although he was appointed for the whole of the Ghassānid limitrophe and beyond, Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, was likewise his headquarters. Thus two of the major actors in this drama were related to Arabia, and it is only natural that the letter should have been specially prepared for this Provincia, which thus emerges not only as the military province of the warrior king of the federates but also as an ecclesiastical province important in the Patriarchate of Antioch.

2. Noteworthy in the letter is that it is addressed not only to the various orders of clerics, but also to the people of Arabia: "populo fidei Christum diligentis qui in Arabia habitat."⁹⁴ The bishops want the people also to be aware of the controversy, and this reflects the keen interest that not only the clerics but also the congregations of the various churches had in theological controversies.⁹⁵ This raises the question of the language that these people understood. No doubt both Greek and Syriac were understood by most of the clergy, but whether everybody in the Provincia Arabia could read either language is doubtful. If the urban *Rhomaioi* of the Provincia were bilingual, knowing both Syriac and Greek, there were those in the villages. Even if these rustic *Rhomaioi* were conversant with these two languages and needed no translation, there remained the *foederati*, the armies about which Arethas spoke when he said that they believed in the encyclical and what Jacob and the Oriental bishops had decided. No doubt Arethas and the prominent phy-

⁹⁴ *Documenta*, p. 142, line 21.

⁹⁵ The first letter to the provinces is also addressed to the congregations of the provinces, *congregationibus fidelibus* (ibid., p. 136, lines 17–18). Some of these, such as Phoenicia Libanensis, had a strong Arab ethnic element, but others did not. The writers of this first letter indicate in the last sentence that they sent copies to other places "ad confirmationem et persuasionem eorum qui legant" (ibid., p. 141, lines 36–37). The Syriac for *legant* is not the normal word for read, *qrā*, but *fga*^ε, which means "to happen to, to chance to read." So presumably the bishops hoped their letter would be read not only by those whom they specify at the beginning but others who may happen on it, the implication being that they wanted a wider readership for it.

larchs who had to transact business with the authorities knew Greek and Syriac, but this is difficult to predicate of the soldiers, the armies Arethas spoke about. These probably had a version in Arabic for their information.⁹⁶

The Third Letter

The third letter⁹⁷ is closely related to the first two, especially the second, to which it is a reply. While the first two letters tell much about Arethas, this one tells much about his province and the ecclesiastical situation in it. It is a most precious document not so much for what it says as for its 137 subscriptions, an astounding number that reveals the pervasive presence of monastic life in the province of the Ghassānid phylarch. In addition to the wealth of information these subscriptions provide on a variety of subjects, they are also an indication of the extent of Christian life in the whole of Oriens: if one single province had so many monasteries, how many more churches must it have had! The letter contains subscriptions of only the abbots of the province; but the second letter was addressed also to other clerics, the priests and presbyters, and if the reply of these had survived, it would have revealed at least an equal number of churches in the province.⁹⁸ The same may be predicated of the other provinces of Oriens to which letters were sent, as indicated in the second letter. These provinces must have replied, but their replies have not survived. Thus the intensity and pervasiveness of religious life in Arabia and the Ghassānid limitrophe receive resounding confirmation from this primary document, inferential as this statement is.

The analysis of this letter will be limited to the Arab and Ghassānid profile. The analysis provides exciting-confrontations with Arabic sources of three types: (1) the references to Ghassānid toponyms in the contemporary poetry of Nābigha and Ḥassān, especially the latter; (2) references to the localities associated with the Ghassānids in the later Arabic sources, especially the two geographical dictionaries of Bakrī and Yāqūt; (3) and the list of Ghassānid buildings to be found in the work of Ḥamza, of later Islamic times. As this Syriac letter is the most primary of all documents in this respect, it provides splendid testimony to the essential reliability of these Arabic sources.⁹⁹

Nöldeke was the first to grasp the crucial importance of the list that had been published by W. Wright. In a brilliant article, he commented on the subscriptions with his usual masterliness, fifteen years before he wrote his

⁹⁶ On the strongly Arab character of the Provincia Arabia and the neighboring regions in Palestine and Phoenicia, see below, 824–25, 835–37, cf. 929, 935–38, for Nöldeke's conclusions.

⁹⁷ *Documenta*, 145–56.

⁹⁸ Reference to Ghassānid churches in general has been noted in connection with the restoration of Paul the Black's name to the diptychs of the Monophysite church; see above, 802–3.

⁹⁹ An intensive study of these toponyms in the Arabic sources will be undertaken in *BASIC II*.

classic work on the Ghassānids.¹⁰⁰ All who have dealt with this letter since then have been in his debt.¹⁰¹ However, with the lapse of more than a century, with so many advances in Byzantine and Ghassānid history, these subscriptions are due for a thorough reexamination. But before analyzing them, it is necessary to say a few words about the text, especially as Nöldeke disregarded it.

The text may be described as the profession of the Monophysite faith in general but with special reference to the Tritheistic heresy.

1. Although Arabia was the province of Arethas and of his bishop, Theodore, the name of Jacob precedes that of Theodore in the list of addressees. This was, of course, how the second letter was signed; nevertheless it testifies to the prestige of Jacob and the fact that he was the senior member of this ecclesiastical pair.

2. As in other Monophysite documents, there emerges a Monophysite orthodoxy based on the teachings of the doctors of this church—Severus, Anthimus, and Theodosius,¹⁰² the late patriarchs of Antioch, Constantinople, and Alexandria, respectively.

3. In expressing their hopes for the union of the churches, the archimandrites speak of "serenos et triumphatores imperatores nostros."¹⁰³ This is noteworthy since there was no reference to *imperatores* ("kings") in the letter of the bishops to the archimandrites (as there was at the end of their letters to the provinces). Consequently the phrase could not have been simply copied from the letter of the bishops to the archimandrites but must have been an addition of the latter. This can only have been an implied reference to the two rulers most directly concerned with this controversy, Justin II and Arethas, perhaps especially Arethas. The letter to the archimandrites had clearly informed them of his efforts in the Tritheistic controversy, while the emperor's role in it for the last three years must have been explained to them by Arethas and Theodore.¹⁰⁴ The reference is of some importance because of the identity of the referents and the titles used to describe the *imperatores*.

a. The abbots who wrote from the Provincia Arabia, of which Arethas

¹⁰⁰ See his "Topographie," 419–44.

¹⁰¹ Notably T. J. Lamy, "Profession de foi," *Actes du onzième congrès international des orientalistes* (Paris, 1897), 117–37; and Aigrain, in "Arabie," cols. 1209–11. The first article pays attention to the text of the letter and not only to the subscription since Nöldeke was not interested in the former. Lamy makes no real advances in discussing the subscriptions; in fact, he indulges in some grave mistakes in his "Remarques," pp. 134–37, one of which was corrected by Aigrain. The best feature of his article is the list of subscriptions which is clearly presented (pp. 125–34) and is easy to follow and read.

¹⁰² *Documenta*, p. 146, lines 24–25.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 148, lines 6–7.

¹⁰⁴ In spite of the doctrinal differences, the Byzantine *basileus* remained for the Monophysites of the empire their *malkā/malik/basileus*, and Justin's genuine efforts at reconciling the Monophysites was greeted with enthusiasm by them. Provincial and Monophysite attachment to and respect for the *basileus* are reflected stylistically in the letter in the phrase *regia via* (*ibid.*, p. 146, line 32).

was phylarch, and in reply to a letter of the bishops in which the role of Arethas is fully and powerfully described, must have had Arethas in mind and so included him in the term *imperatores*. In fact Monophysite Arethas was more the king of the archimandrites of Arabia than the distant Dyophysite Justin. There is no mention of him by name in the letter, which may sound strange in view of such reference to him in the letter of the bishops. But this omission may be consonant with the serious tone of their reply and its involvement in purely theological and spiritual matters.

b. On the other hand, the letter was written around 570, about the time that Arethas died, although exactly when his death occurred is not known. His death has been inferred from the reference to Munḍir, his son and successor, in the subscriptions,¹⁰⁵ and their omission of Arethas' name. This is possible, and if so, the reference to the Ghassānid within the term *imperatores* would be to Munḍir. However, the argument *ex silentio* is not necessarily valid. Arethas may have been taken ill, or for some reason an abbot associated with him did not sign or was not present. This could be confirmed by the fact that the epithets applied to *imperatores* are not entirely appropriate to Munḍir who would have just succeeded, had won no victories yet, and had not reigned long enough to be described as *serenus*. In fact, he turned out to be the opposite, a very aggressive warrior.

c. This leads to the discussion of the two terms. They are not the same as those in the first letter of the bishops, which used *piissimi* and *christophili* of the *imperatores*. In Syriac they appear as "nihe wa lbi shay zakūthā," for ἡμερος (*mansuetus*) and τροπαιοῦχος (*triumphator*), which appear in the titulature of Justin II,¹⁰⁶ especially *mansuetus*, apparently for the first time¹⁰⁷ in imperial titulature, in March 570. The archimandrites may have echoed this, but it is not clear how they, in distant Arabia, would have thought of these titles since *mansuetus* was a new title and Justin II had won no victories that reverberated in Oriens to suggest *triumphator* to the archimandrites. Both titles, however, are applicable to Arethas, whose victories over his Lakhmid adversaries were crowned by the resounding victory of the battle of Qinnasrīn in 554, and who since then had survived in the consciousness of Oriens, which he rid of the devastating raids of the Lakhmid Munḍir, as both the victorious king and the keeper of the peace¹⁰⁸ in the limitrophe for some fifteen years. The two titles appear not conventional ones when applied to Arethas (as they do when ap-

¹⁰⁵ See below, 831.

¹⁰⁶ For these Greek and Latin terms in the titulature of Justin II, see G. Rösch, *ONOMA ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ* (Vienna, 1978), 168. Thus Chabor's translation of the Syriac as *sereni* is not quite accurate.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 48. This confirms Nöldeke's observation (*GF*, 13) that these Syriac documents were translated into Syriac by a competent, learned man.

¹⁰⁸ On the *pax Ghassanica* imposed by Arethas in the limitrophe, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, V.3, p. 212, lines 20–25. On the application of the term *mansuetus* to the Germanic kings of the Occident, see Rösch, *ONOMA*, 48 note 79; see also *ibid.*, 104.

plied to the *autokrator* in Constantinople)¹⁰⁹ but well deserved. As they were also applicable to Justin, it was possible to apply them to both.¹¹⁰

Thus, of the three kings possibly implied in the word *malkēn* (*imperatores*) in the letter, the two titles are most applicable to Arethas, and consequently he must be included in its denotation, although it is possible, even probable, that he had died by then.¹¹¹ If so, the titles would have been used about him posthumously and would have been applied to Mundir proleptically. As it turned out, the title *triumphator* proved eminently applicable to Mundir but *mansuetus* singularly inappropriate.

V. THE SUBSCRIPTIONS OF THE ARCHIMANDRITES OF ARABIA

The importance of the 137 subscriptions in the third letter has already been indicated. They were carefully examined and commented upon by Nöldeke in the most adequate manner.¹¹² But as he commented on the entire list of 137 subscriptions, the Ghassānid and Arab elements in it were not highlighted as they will be here for the light they shed on Ghassānid history.

1

The first problem that the list raises is the extent and boundaries of the Provincia Arabia as presented in it. Nöldeke noted that it was more extensive than the secular Byzantine province, arguing that the ecclesiastical province of Arabia contained portions of Phoenicia Libanensis, especially Damascene, the region around Damascus in the south, to which belonged many of the monasteries included in the list.¹¹³

This observation that the power and authority of the Ghassānids extended beyond the boundaries of the imperial Provincia into these adjacent regions is valid, but his conclusion on the existence of "the ecclesiastical province of Arabia" is not and can be confusing.¹¹⁴ There was no ecclesiastical province of Arabia wider in extent than the imperial one, and the abbots refer to it by its technical Greek secular name, ὑπαρχία (*hyparchy*).¹¹⁵ Nöldeke

¹⁰⁹ Justin II was anything but triumphant in 570, and was far from gentle; witness, *inter alia*, his treatment of Mundir himself (*BASIC* I.1, 346–50); but a good case was made for his gentleness (Rösch, *ONOMA*, 104).

¹¹⁰ It should be remembered that these titles do not have to be true as predicated of the rulers; they were conventionally applied to them.

¹¹¹ The year 569 may then be taken as the year of his death, which would fit well with the forty years allotted to his reign in a pre-Islamic poem, the first year of his reign being 529.

¹¹² In "Topographie."

¹¹³ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 420–21. To Phoenicia Libanensis may be added part of Palaestina Secunda, to which belonged some monasteries in the list.

¹¹⁴ For his phrase "Kirchenprovenz Arabia," see Nöldeke, "Topographie," 419–20.

¹¹⁵ *Documenta*, textus, p. 209, line 17, where not the standard ἑπαρχία but ὑπαρχία is used, transliterated into Syriac. On ὑπαρχία used for *provincia* in the *laudatio* of Augustus for Agrippa, see H. J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions*, American Studies in Papyrology

wrote his topographic article some fourteen years before his monograph specifically devoted to the Ghassānids, and even in his monograph he had no clear conception of the Ghassānid presence in Oriens. The power of the Ghassānids, especially at the end of the reign of Arethas, extended well beyond the boundaries of the Provincia, and consequently these subscriptions belonging to Palaestina Secunda and Phoenicia Libanensis cannot argue for the existence of what he called the ecclesiastical province of Arabia. They may be explained by the fact that the signatories joined their colleagues for the general meeting which the abbots of Arabia held in order to answer the letter of the bishops, specifically addressed to the clerics of Arabia. It has also been suggested by Nöldeke that the place may have been Dārayyā in Damascene.¹¹⁶ If this was the venue, many abbots from that region, which is in Phoenicia, attended, and so did those from Palaestina Secunda, which was nearby. But participation of the Phoenician and Palestinian bishops cannot argue that these belonged ecclesiastically to Arabia or that there was a "Kirchenprovinz Arabia."¹¹⁷

2

From the list of 137 signatures, the following may be singled out as associated with the Arabs and specifically the Ghassānids.¹¹⁸

A

1. Theodore, priest and abbot of the monastery of Abbot Marcellinus of the Mountain of Ḥārith,¹¹⁹ who signed after the letter was translated for him

13 (Toronto, 1974), 138. ὑπαρχία may turn out to be neither an individualism in documents of Augustus nor a scribal error.

¹¹⁶ See below, 829.

¹¹⁷ Nöldeke ("Topographie," 422) also noted that the region of Arabia south of the Ḥawrān (the Balqā', Amonitis) was not represented in the subscriptions, and he explained the non-participation as owing either to the fact that the region had few monasteries or that some of the as yet unidentified monasteries in the list belonged to that region. On the geographical groups into which the monasteries may be divided, see Aigrain, "Arabie," cols. 1209–1310.

¹¹⁸ As Nöldeke has discussed these subscriptions, there is no need to repeat what he said, and the reader is referred to his discussion. But each subscription will be noted briefly in order to show its Ghassānid or Arab connection. New materials will be added to the discussion when available. A detailed treatment of all these toponyms is assigned to BASIC II. Unlike Nöldeke's, Lamy's list of subscriptions (above, note 101) is numbered and clearly printed; so those relevant to the Ghassānids and Arabs will be cited from Lamy's list and numeration, which will dispense with the necessity of continual citation of page and line numbers.

The names of the clerics in these Syriac subscriptions are unvocalized, as are the toponyms. Hence an exact and accurate transliteration is not possible, but the consonantal skeletons are so clear that there is no chance of error in the process of identification. Chabot transliterated them into Latin in his version of the letter in CSCO and Lamy into French, while Nöldeke desisted and commented on them after reproducing them in Syriac. Arabic and Syriac macrons are not exactly identical in their function of expressing phonetic values, but the difference is minimal and does not conduce to any confusion in the process of transliterating these Syriac words and their Arabic equivalents.

¹¹⁹ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 430–31.

(no. 1 in the list). What significance should be given to the fact that he is the first subscriber is not clear. The subscription refers directly to Ḥārith/Arethas, one of two such references in the list. The mountain (present-day Tall al-Ḥāra) is in the Golān and is called after him. The name of the convent is strange. Marcellinus is a saint in the West, but here he is the abbot after whom the convent is named. Who this abbot Marcellinus was is not clear. If he was a sixth-century monk, he may have had a special relationship to the Ghassānids on whose mountain he had his monastery. Theodore apparently knew no Greek, the original language of the letter of the bishops, but he signed it after it was translated for him into Syriac. What his ethnic background was is not clear. He may or may not have been an Arab. His name is no evidence that he was not, since this was also the name of Theodore, the Arab bishop of the Ghassānids.

2. Anastasius, a monk of the great monastery of Ghashimīn, who signed in Greek (no. 2). Ghashimīn, Arabic Jāsīm, is a town solidly associated with the Ghassānids, as is clear from the poetry of Ḥassān. Nöldeke made the connection and also noted that more than one monastery in or near Ghashimīn/Jāsīm were represented in the list¹²⁰ and their abbots all signed in Greek. In addition to the one just mentioned, there were:

a. George, priest and abbot of the monastery of Bēth-Sabnīn (Sabinianus) of Ghashimīn/Jāsīm, who signed by his own hand (no. 23).

b. Proclus, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ghashimīn/Jāsīm, who signed by his own hand (no. 31).

c. Mānes, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ghashimīn/Jāsīm, who signed in Greek by his own hand (no. 35).

d. Elias/Iliya, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ghashimīn/Jāsīm, who signed in Greek by his own hand (no. 36). This same priest and abbot of Jāsīm signed for his namesake, priest and abbot of the monastery of the village of Kephār Ūshai (no. 128).

3. Ḥabshūsh,¹²¹ priest and abbot of the monastery of Bath-Ar^ε, signed by the hand of Thomas, priest of the Mountain of Ḥārith (no. 4). This recalls the first subscription which involves Theodore, a priest and abbot of the monastery of Abbot Marcellinus of the Mountain of Ḥārith. In this subscription Thomas is called only a priest and is not related to a monastery but to the mountain, which leaves his function ambiguous. Was he an inmate of the same monastery or was he only a priest for the churches of the entire mountain?

4. Iliya/Elias, priest and abbot of the monastery of Bēth-Mār-Stephen of

¹²⁰ Ibid., 429.

¹²¹ Ḥabshūsh is an Aramaic name according to Nöldeke, *ibid.*, 444.

‘Aqrab (no. 6). ‘Aqrab/‘Aqrabā’ is a Ghassānid residence associated with them in Yāqūt, who also speaks of Dayr ‘Aqrabā’, the monastery of ‘Aqrab.¹²²

5. George, priest and abbot of the monastery of Bēth-Ḥalā (no. 13). As noted by Nöldeke,¹²³ the Arabic sources, especially Ḥamza, associate this with the Ghassānids, and Ḥamza states that it was built by ‘Amr ibn-Jafna, the Ghassānid king.

6. David, abbot of the monastery of Bēṭaliā, signed for Mār Paul, priest and abbot of the monastery of Būrgā Ḥawrā, “the White Tower” (nos. 14–15). Nöldeke¹²⁴ has argued that this locality, the White Tower, or the other, called Būrgā de Ḥariph (no. 59), may be associated with al-Burj, where an inscription set up by Mundir was found, while “the White Tower” reminds one of al-Khirbat al-Bayḏā’.¹²⁵

7. Thomas, priest and abbot of Tubnīn/Tubnā (no. 18). Nöldeke has already identified this with the Tubnā in the Lajā/Trachonitis, attested in the poetry of Nābigha on the Ghassānid Nu‘mān.¹²⁶

8. George, who signed for Mār Alōs, priest and abbot of Bēth-Mār-Sargis (Sergius) of Gabītha/Jābiya, after receiving his authorization (no. 24). This is the most celebrated of all the Ghassānid residences, Jābiya, in the Golān. It had a monastery with the name of Bēth-Mār-Sergius, further evidence of the dedication of the Ghassānids to St. Sergius.¹²⁷ Presumably the abbot of the monastery was not available for signing the letter and so delegated the priest George to sign for him.

9. Sabnī, priest and abbot of the monastery of Mār Ṭīṭūs of ‘Aqrab, who signed by the hand of his priest Conon (no. 26). ‘Aqrab/‘Aqrabā’, as a Ghassānid residence, has already been noted in connection with another convent, that of Bēth-Mār-Stephen. So it had two convents.

10. John, priest and abbot of Nahrā d’Qasṭrā, who signed in Greek by his own hand (no. 39). Nöldeke has correctly identified this with the modern Arabic Nahr al-Quṣayr, northeast of Damascus.¹²⁸ Important is his drawing attention to the fact that in Wright’s catalogue it appears as the monastery of Arab monks, Ṭayāyê. It is noteworthy that Nahrā d’Qasṭrā appears again in subscription no. 46, where Theodore, priest of Nahrā d’Qasṭrā, signed in

¹²² Ibid., 91.

¹²³ Ibid., 437.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 426.

¹²⁵ Since then, H. Gaube has published his monograph on Khirbat al-Bayḏā’ which, he argued, was a Ghassānid structure; on this see *BASIC II*.

¹²⁶ See Nöldeke, “Topographie,” 431.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 436. The list of subscriptions is striking evidence for the popularity of the name Sergius among the Monophysites. This is the most common name among the subscribers; it occurs some dozen times. Job (Ayyūb) recurs a few times, and is a name that is also important to the Ghassānids.

¹²⁸ Nöldeke, “Topographie,” 423–24.

Greek. So the subscriptions provide two non-Arab names assumed by Arab monks.

11. John, priest and abbot of the Mountain of Maḥaggā, who signed by his own hand (no. 43). The toponym was correctly interpreted by Nöldeke as a pilgrimage place, but without much comment.¹²⁹ It is, however, quite important for the Arab profile of this list.

The term is certainly Arabic, not Syriac, since *ḥaggā* in Syriac, as in Hebrew, means festival, not pilgrimage. It is morphologically an Arabic noun of place. Its Arabic character reflects the Arab milieu (Ḥawrān, Auranitis) that surrounded it and gave it an Arabic name. Its semantics reflect its history. It was a holy place, a place of pilgrimage. Yāqūt, who wrote in late Islamic times, reflects the Islamized view of the place as holy. Although the details he provides may be rejected, yet the essential character of the place as holy is preserved in his work. Of Maḥajja he says: "It is one of the villages of Ḥawrān in which there is a stone which is visited. It is alleged that the Prophet (Muḥammad) sat on it; but the truth is that the Prophet did not travel beyond Bostra, and it is said that seventy prophets are (buried) in its mosque."¹³⁰ It is easy to divest the account of its legendary character. The stone may have stood over the relics of a saint, while the mosque must have been a church, possibly a *martyrion*, with the relics of one or more saints or martyrs.

This subscription is unique in the list. The term itself in Arabic is a precious one, since it is rarely attested in this sense,¹³¹ although there must have been many *maḥajjas*, pilgrimage centers, in pre-Islamic times among the Arabs. The place itself must have been an important religious site, perhaps the repository of relics of many saints, elevated by local practice into a pilgrimage center, in spite of its proximity to the place of pilgrimage par excellence, Jerusalem in the Holy Land. It is noteworthy that the phrase, the Mountain of Maḥajja, involves two places, the village of Maḥajja and the mountain near it. The monastery apparently was built on the mountain.

The list (no. 52) makes another mention of the Mountain of Maḥaggā. Stephen, priest and abbot of the monastery of Qûnîthâ, signed through Mar Sergius of the Mountain of Maḥajja.

12. Khulayf, priest and abbot of the monastery of Kefar Shemesh, who signed this letter and also declared himself a follower of the orthodox fathers

¹²⁹ Ibid., 432. His reference to Waddington 2413b is mistaken, since this inscription pertains to 'Aqrabā', not Maḥajja.

¹³⁰ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v. Muḥajja, so vocalized. As Yāqūt does not indicate the vocalization in his own words as he sometimes does, the editorial vocalization must be a mistake: this is a noun of place from the well-known Arabic verb *ḥajja*. It is correctly transliterated by Chabot, *Documenta*, p. 150, line 33.

¹³¹ Curiously enough the lexica give the meaning, possibly derivative, of Maḥajja, not as a pilgrimage center, but as the road that leads to one, the wide road.

who assembled at Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus (no. 48). This place has been left unidentified by Nöldeke.¹³² What is interesting is the priest's name, a hypocoristicon, the only definitely Arab name in the whole list.¹³³ Khulayf must have been possessed of a strong sense of Arab identity since, on attaining the priesthood and the abbacy, he did not, on ordination, assume a biblical or a Christian name.

13. Mārōn, priest and abbot of the monastery of Bēth-Īlanā of Dārayyā (no. 86). Nöldeke identified Dārayyā with the well-known toponym, associated with the Ghassānids in the contemporary poetry, and noted that since it occurs more frequently than any other name, it might have been the meeting place of the abbots of these subscriptions.¹³⁴ In addition to the monastery of Bēth-Īlanā ("the Monastery of the Tree") just mentioned, there are the following attestations of Dārayyā.

a. Daniel, priest and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā, who signed by his own hand (no. 87).

b. Conon, priest and abbot of the monastery of Kaphā, signed by the hand of Mārōn, of the "Monastery of the Tree" in Dārayyā (no. 91).

c. Iliyā/Elias, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ṣafrīn, who signed by the hand of Daniel, priest and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā (no. 102).

d. Rōmanā, deacon and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā, who signed by his own hand (no. 103).

e. Barkī, priest and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā, signed by the hand of the preceding deacon Rōmanā (no. 104).

This of course raises the problem of many abbots presiding over the same convent or different convents in the same village, Dārayyā.

f. Paul, deacon and abbot of "the monastery of Lōzē (Monastery of the Almonds), of the village of Dārayyā," signed by the hand of the deacon John, of the same village of Dārayyā (no. 105). The status of this John is not clear, whether he belonged to a monastery in Dārayyā or to a church in the village.

g. Sabnīn, deacon and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā, who signed by the hand of Mārōn, priest and abbot of the monastery of Bēth-Īlanā (Monastery of the Tree) (no. 107).

h. Ḥalphai, priest and abbot of the "Monastery of the Field in Dārayyā," who signed by his own hand (no. 110).

i. The same, Ḥalphai, also signed for Mār John, priest and abbot of the monastery of Dārayyā (no. 111).

¹³² Nöldeke, "Topographie," 422.

¹³³ Ibid., 444.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 427. It is noteworthy that two Muslim ascetics (*zubbād*) of the 10th century are associated with Dārayyā—Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī and his son Sulaymān. The tomb of the first in Dārayyā is a shrine that is visited; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v. Dārayyā.

j. Sebat, deacon and abbot of the monastery of Mār Jōnan (Jonas) in Dārāyā, who signed by the hand of Mār John, the disciple of the monastery of Bēth-Mār-Salmān (Solomon) of the Kurds (no. 112).

14. John, priest and abbot of the monastery of Mār Paul in Sakiā (Sakkā'), who signed by the hand of Mār Stephen of the monastery of Mār Salmān of the Kurds (no. 93). Sakiā is none other than the Sakkā' of the poetry of Ḥassān, who associates it with the Ghassānids, as noted by Nöldeke.¹³⁵

15. Ḥabūsh, priest and abbot of the monastery of Sakiā/Sakkā', who signed by his own hand (no. 94). While the preceding priest John signed as abbot of the monastery of Mār Paul in Sakiā/Sakkā', Ḥabūsh signed as the abbot of the monastery of Sakkā',¹³⁶ which could suggest another monastery at Sakkā'.

16. Leontius, deacon and abbot of the monastery of Mār Sergius of Butsa', signed by the hand of Mār Mānes (no. 97). Nöldeke¹³⁷ has suggested Arabic Buṣay' and Buṣ', mentioned by Ḥassān in his poetry on the Ghassānids, but was not so certain. However, the absolute rarity of the name suggests correct identification. Butsa' is mentioned again in subscriptions 98 and 101.

17. Ḥalḥai, deacon and abbot of the monastery of the village of Kūsītā (Kiswa), signed by the hand of Elias, priest and abbot of the monastery of the Kurds (no. 100). This was identified by Nöldeke¹³⁸ with Kiswa, also associated with the Ghassānids.

18. Antiochus, priest and abbot of the monastery of Gabtīl, who signed by his own hand (no. 113). Nöldeke was unable to identify Gabtīl.¹³⁹ He drew attention to an approximate homophone in South Arabia and thought the South Arabian tribes who emigrated to Syria might have brought the name with them. But the *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens such as the Tanūkhids and the Ghassānids did come from the Arabian south; hence this could have been one of their residences. The question arises whether this was the same Antiochus that appears as one of the abbots of Oriens who sent a letter to the bishops in Constantinople, giving support to the Monophysite patriarch Paul after the latter was calumniated. There Antiochus appears as the abbot of the "monastery of the Arabs," which suggests not the "monastery of Gabtīl" but the one discussed earlier (above, no. 10) as the monastery of Nahrā d'Qastrā, northeast of Damascus.¹⁴⁰

19. Sergius, priest and abbot of the monastery of 'Ūqabtā, signed by the

¹³⁵ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 425.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 427.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 439.

¹⁴⁰ Further on Antiochus, see below, 843–45.

hand of the priest, Mār Eustathius, his prior, who is the priest of the church of the glorious, Christ-loving patrician Mundīr (no. 121). This is perhaps the most important subscription in the entire list as it involves the Ghassānid Mundīr. The discussion here will be limited to the two clerics of the signature and to the toponym.¹⁴¹

The two clerics of the subscription as well as the locality ʿŪqabtā present many problems.

a. Nöldeke¹⁴² discussed the locality and its possible relation to ʿAqabat al-Shahūrat; he considered the identification precarious. However, in the absence of any other possible toponym, the chances are that he is right, since the area in which it lies, south of Damascus, has other localities associated with the Monophysite Ghassānids, and the name ʿAqabat is not common in this region. According to the historian he cites, Abū al-Fidāʾ, it is a path on Jabal al-Aswad (Mountain of the Black) that leads from the Ghūṭa to Kiswa. Aigrain accepted this and considered the monastery of ʿŪqabtā to be "the monastery of Jabal al-Aswad."¹⁴³ This may be tentatively accepted.

b. The first cleric, Sergius, was absent, for some unknown reason, and signed by the hand of his prior (Syriac *ṭhenyānā*), his second in authority, who is also simultaneously the priest of the church of Mundīr. The latter is the more important of the two clerics. He is at one and the same time a monk, a prior at the convent of Jabal al-Aswad, and a parish priest of the church of Mundīr. Since this is a meeting of conventual archimandrites, he is present there in his capacity not as a parish priest but as the prior of a monastery, serving under his abbot. Even so, his participation is striking, and it is perfectly possible that the abbot of the monastery had him sign in his place for this very reason, namely, that he was the priest of the "Church of Mundīr," whose father, Arethas, had played an important role in the Tritheistic controversy about which these archimandrites had received a letter. So it is just possible that they wanted to reflect the Ghassānid presence in the subscription in this fashion, especially as there was no explicit reference by name to either Arethas or his son in their letter. The subscription made good this omission and reminded the readers of the Ghassānid presence.¹⁴⁴

B

In addition to the identifications made by Nöldeke, the following may be added as monasteries associated with the Ghassānids.

1. Conon, priest and abbot of the monastery of Goufna, who signed by

¹⁴¹ On Mundīr and the Ghassānid profile on the subscription, see below, 834–38.

¹⁴² Nöldeke, "Topographie," 427.

¹⁴³ Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1211.

¹⁴⁴ Although the Ghassānids had a strong sense of Arab identity, as reflected in their names, their clerics assumed non-Arab names—biblical, Christian, or Graeco-Roman—such as Eustathius.

his own hand (no. 10). Strangely enough, Nöldeke does not associate this monastery with the Ghassānids, in spite of the strikingly Ghassānid name, Jafna. In Ḥamza he is a famous builder, although not of monasteries. His son ʿAmr is, and Ḥamza did not give an exhaustive list of Jafna's buildings. His son may have built the monastery in his honor since he built three monasteries which Ḥamza enumerates.¹⁴⁵

2. George, priest and abbot of the monastery of NMR, who signed by his own hand in Greek (no. 30). The Ghassānid association of this monastery is much less certain than the preceding one and is more or less conjectural. The vocalization of the Syriac is not clear at all. Chabot transliterates Namāra; Lamy gives it as Namar. Nöldeke leaves it untransliterated.¹⁴⁶

It is noteworthy that, in the process of identification, Nöldeke could not entertain Namāra, the well-known burial place of Imru' al-Qays, "the King of all the Arabs" of the fourth century, because he could not find evidence for the association of the locality with the Arabs; only Latin and Greek graffiti and inscriptions were found there at the time by Waddington. But after the discovery of the famous Arabic Namāra inscription, the identification cannot be entirely ruled out. Namāra could very well have been a Christian federate center not inappropriate for the erection of a monastery. In the List of Ḥamza, the Ghassānid al-Ayham is associated with Dāt Anmār. Lamy transliterated NMR as Namar, and in one of Dussaud's detailed maps, there appears Namar, south of ʿAqrabā' and slightly east of Nahr ʿAllān, one of the tributaries of the Yarmūk.¹⁴⁷

3. John signed for Elias, priest and abbot of the monastery of Gadīrtā, after receiving his authorization (no. 57). Ḥamza ascribes to the Ghassānid Thaʿlaba the building of Sarrāḥ al-Ghadīr,¹⁴⁸ and it is just possible that the Gadīrtā monastery may be identified with this Ghassānid building. Again this is purely conjectural as the preceding one was.

4. Iliya/Elias, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ṣafrīn, who signed by the hand of Daniel of the monastery of Dārayyā (no. 102). This subscription has been noted before in connection with Dārayyā, but it is more important for the locality, Ṣafrīn. Nöldeke commented on the locality and identified it with Dayr al-ʿAṣāfir, "the monastery of the birds,"¹⁴⁹ but does not seem to have remembered that Ḥassān in his poetry associates Ṣafrīn with the Ghas-

¹⁴⁵ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 434. For Jafna and ʿAmr, see Ḥamza, *Tārīkh*, 99. For the vocalization that yields Goufna rather than Jafna, see also Malalas, who transmits the name of the Ghassānid phylarch as the list does; *BASIC* I.1, 63.

¹⁴⁶ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 437.

¹⁴⁷ Ḥamza, *Tārīkh*, 103; for Imru' al-Qays and Christianity, see *BAFOC*, 32–34. For Namar see Dussaud, *Topographie*, map 1, D2 (opp. p. 8).

¹⁴⁸ Ḥamza, *Tārīkh*, 99–100.

¹⁴⁹ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 425.

sānids¹⁵⁰ and mentions it as a residence, *maghnā*, for them. Nöldeke refers to Yāqūt on the battle of the Yarmūk where there is reference to Ṣafrīn and the Ghassānids, but he seems to have thought of it only as the site of the battle, not as a residence.

5. Sergius, priest and abbot of the monastery of Ḥālīōram, signed by the hand of brother Julian¹⁵¹ (no. 119). Nöldeke has left this monastery without comment, but since then there have been advances in identifying it with Latin Heliaramia of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. This toponym appears there and has been identified by Honigmann with the Ḥālīōram of the Monophysite subscriptions. Dussaud later identified Latin Heliaramia with Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, southwest of Palmyra in Phoenicia Libanensis, but rejected Honigmann's identification of Heliaramia with the Monophysite monastery, on the ground that the latter was located not in Phoenicia Libanensis but in Arabia.¹⁵² Dussaud's contention, however, may now be rejected on the following grounds.

a. The name is so uncommon that it is most unlikely that there were two localities with that name.

b. Dussaud apparently was under the impression that all the toponyms mentioned in the Monophysite document belonged to the Provincia Arabia. But, as Nöldeke was the first to show, this was not the case, and toponyms from Phoenicia Libanensis (to which belonged Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī) even as far as north of Damascus were included in the subscriptions.¹⁵³

c. Archaeology has revealed that before the Umayyad palace was built at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, a Byzantine monastery had existed. Two Greek inscriptions that involve Arethas the Ghassānid were also discovered, and these reveal him as a friend and possibly a benefactor of the monastery.¹⁵⁴

As research has not revealed a place in the Provincia Arabia with the name Ḥālīōram, the chances are that this monastery was none other than the Heliaramia of the Peutinger Map, which has been identified with the locality southwest of Palmyra and which had a monastery and a Ghassānid inscription. If clerics from monasteries north of Damascus came to the meeting and signed the Monophysite document, it is not unnatural to assume that they also came from this locality, farther as it was from Damascus, but still in Phoenicia Libanensis.

6. John, priest and archimandrite of the monastery of ʿIssanayyê, for

¹⁵⁰ Ḥassān, *Dīwān*.

¹⁵¹ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 439.

¹⁵² Dussaud, *Topographie*, 265 note 1.

¹⁵³ And if the "monastery of the Ghassānids" discussed below turns out to be the one in Palestine, this would provide the case of another distant monastery that, like Ḥālīōram, sent a representative to the meeting of the Monophysite abbots.

¹⁵⁴ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 259–60.

whom signed Mār Elias, the archimandrite of the monastery of the Arʿabnaia (no. 129). This by far is the most important gain from these subscriptions as far as the Ghassānids are concerned. Nöldeke, *mirabile dictu*, left it un-commented upon,¹⁵⁵ but ʿIssanayyê can only be the Syriac form of the Ghassānids.¹⁵⁶ The term “Ghassānid” very rarely occurred in the Syriac sources and had not been known to have occurred at all when Nöldeke wrote. Its first attestation was in the recently discovered letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, composed around 520, in which it appears as it does in the list, with the exception of the addition of a *yōdb* after the *ʿayn*.¹⁵⁷ No other toponym can be identified with it, and it is quite natural to assume that the Ghassānids, who were such staunch Monophysites, would have built a monastery that carried their name, an assumption that is confirmed by the existence of the monastery in Palestine called “the Monastery of the Ghassānids,”¹⁵⁸ Dayr Ghassāneh, or Ghassāni. Furthermore, the Ghassānids did build churches, such as the one described in this very list, as “the Church of Munḍir,” Arethas’ son and successor; if a church carried their name, so did a monastery. The identification raises the question of whether or not the monastery in this list is the same as that in Palestine, or was it some other monastery with the name of “the Monastery of the Ghassānids.” The monastery in Palestine was rather far from the meeting place of the abbots of the list; but it has been argued that the monastery of Ḥaliōram, a rather distant monastery southwest of Palmyra, was represented. Alternatively, this monastery of the Ghassānids in the list might be identified with one in the Provincia Arabia,¹⁵⁹ since there is a toponym with the name Ghassāne there, and it is just possible that the monastery mentioned in the list was located there.

The name of the monastery raises the question of whether it was only built and/or endowed by the Ghassānids or whether its inmates were themselves Ghassānids. If the former, it is likely to have carried the name of the benefactor, as in the case of “the Church of Munḍir” or “the Mountain of Ḥārith/Arethas.” Chances are that some Ghassānids decided to devote themselves to the monastic life and so lived there.¹⁶⁰ The Lakhmid king Nuʿmān became a monk, and so did the Salīhid king Dāwūd. Some of the Ghassānid

¹⁵⁵ Nöldeke, “Topographie,” 441.

¹⁵⁶ In Arabic the Ghassānids are referred to as Ghassān, Ghasāsina, Ghassāniyyūn, and Ghassāniyya. The last is the closest to the Syriac form. Syriac does not have the Arabic *gb*, which it expresses in this case through the *ʿayn*.

The “Monastery of Arʿabnaia” should probably be read as the “Monastery of the Arbaʿin or Arbaʿinaia,” that is, the “Monastery of the Forty” Martyrs.

¹⁵⁷ See *Martyrs*, p. xxxi, line 22.

¹⁵⁸ See *BASIC* I.1, 654–55.

¹⁵⁹ Arabian Ghassāne lies close to Bostra, to its northeast; see Sartre, *TE*, map 5.

¹⁶⁰ See *BAFIC*, 161–64, 257–58, 292–300.

troops opted for the religious life with St. Simeon the Younger¹⁶¹ after their victory in the battle of Qinnasrīn in 554. Finally, there is, of course, “the Monastery of the Arabs,”¹⁶² Arab monks who lived together in their monastery, and this could suggest that the monastery of the Ghassānids consisted of monks who were Ghassānid Arabs. This raises the further question of the language of devotion in this monastery, where not Rhomaic Arabs lived but federate Arabs, who, instead of distributing themselves among the various monasteries, decided to live together as Ghassānid Arabs, a datum to be added to the difficult question of an Arabic Bible and liturgy before the rise of Islam.

3

When Nöldeke wrote his “Topographie,” he had no particular interest in the Ghassānids. When he developed an interest in them fifteen years later, his goal was mainly to establish the correct chronology of the dynasty and the sequence of its rulers. Hence he only referred the reader to his article on these subscriptions and did not comment on their implications or on that of the *Documenta Monophysitarum* for the crucial role of the Ghassānids in the ecclesiastical history of the period, and this, of course, affected his overall view and perception of them. The preceding discussion has attempted to do what Nöldeke omitted: to present the Ghassānid role and contribution in both the letters and the subscriptions by singling them out for intensive examination.¹⁶³ The following observations and conclusions may now be made.

1. The letters and the subscriptions have fully demonstrated the powerful Ghassānid presence in the Monophysite movement in Oriens and elsewhere. The number of monasteries associated with them, once these have been disentangled from the Monophysite monasteries in general, turns out to be truly impressive. Within the large area in which these monasteries are diffused, there emerge three principal monastic centers: Dārayyā, Jāsīm, and the Mountain of Hārith/Arethas. It is, of course, difficult to say anything about the ethnic identity of the inmates of these monasteries, since biblical and Graeco-Roman names hide it, or about the devotional languages used in them. But the correlation of Ghassānid physical presence and the monastic centers is striking and clearly suggests at least Ghassānid patronage of the monastic life and institutions. Specifically and explicitly Ghassānid are only two items in the list: “the Dayr (Monastery) of the Ghassānids” and “the Church of Mundir.”

¹⁶¹ See BASIC I.1, 244, 247.

¹⁶² See below, 838–43.

¹⁶³ Nöldeke, Lamy, and Aigrain have commented on various aspects of the subscriptions such as their date, the language of the original document, and the question of clerical literacy; see their articles cited in this chapter.

The Ghassānid and Arab involvement in monasticism will reveal various pockets of Arab monasticism in Oriens and elsewhere. In addition to the Ghassānid monastic clusters in the regions of Dārayyā, Jāsīm, and Mount Ḥārith, there was, of course, the Arab monastic pocket in the Desert of Juda in Palestine, and others that spread in Ḥijāz, such as the region of Madyan, Wādī al-Qurā, Najrān, and Hīra.¹⁶⁴ This is of much relevance to the study of the ascetic movement in Islam which, according to one view, was the basis of Islamic mysticism, or Sufism.¹⁶⁵

The Syriac list of subscriptions gives splendid confirmation to the essential reliability and historicity of the Arabic one of Ḥamza, which is a partial list of the buildings of the Ghassānids and of various types. There are references to the *adyār*, monasteries, that the Ghassānids built. The Syriac list (itself a partial list that does not include other monasteries in Oriens) confirms the data in the Arabic list, such as Dayr Ḥālī, and suggests that the Ghassānid monasteries were much more extensive than Ḥamza chose to transmit, a conclusion that can be drawn even without the help of the Syriac list. Before the latter had been laid under contribution, Ḥamza's list was confronted with epigraphic evidence, which was solid and valuable but scanty. Now the Syriac list, a long list of monasteries, makes possible a new confrontation, Arabic and Syriac, and the wealth of evidence for monasteries suggests that many relevant sources have been lost, which tell the story of the Ghassānids in building castles, palaces, and other structures that survive in Ḥamza's list in only a truncated fashion.¹⁶⁶

2. The question also arises from an examination of the list of subscriptions concerning the Arabness of the region. The inhabitants of the region, the Provincia Arabia, had been "Nabataean" Arabs before they became Rhomaic Arabs after the annexation of Nabataea by Trajan in A.D. 106. But there were ethnic groups other than Arabs in the province, notably the Greeks of the Decapolis and others. After a very careful examination in his usual manner, Nöldeke concluded that the region of these subscriptions was Arab in spite of the many Aramaic names of persons and places:

Aus den auf den griechischen Inschriften vorkommenden Eigennamen, aus den Nachrichten der Araber und noch aus andern Gründen können wir schliessen, dass die Bewohner der von uns besprochenen Gebiete, wenn wir die Ebene von Damascus (vielleicht diese auch nur theilweise) ausnehmen, im 6. Jahrhundert und selbst viel früher schon überwiegend, in einigen Gegenden wohl ausschliesslich, aus Arabern bestanden. . . .

¹⁶⁴ For all these, see *BAFIC*, 289–301.

¹⁶⁵ This is of much importance for those who deal with early Islamic asceticism (*zuhd*) and the contacts of the early Muslim ascetics (*zubbād*, plural of *zāhid*), not only with Christian monks in general, but more specifically with Arab monks in these regions.

¹⁶⁶ Ḥamza's list will be fully treated in *BASIC II*.

Wenn aber auch die Zahl der Ortsnamen, welche sicher arabisch sind oder doch arabisch sein können, noch geringer wäre, als es wirklich der Fall ist, so wäre das noch kein Beweis gegen die arabische Nationalität der Mehrzahl ihrer Bewohner—immer die nächste Umgebung von Damascus abgezogen. Denn die alten Namen haften eben fest und mussten hier um so fester haften, als bis dahin das Aramäische ohne Unterbrechung als Cultursprache den Dialecten der eingewanderten Nabatäer und Jemenenser seine volle Ueberlegenheit bewiesen hatte.¹⁶⁷

The further question arises as to the ethnic background of the inmates of these monasteries.¹⁶⁸ Although they did not have to come from the region, the presumption is that many, or at least some of them, did come from it. One is left in the dark about the devotional language employed in these monasteries. It is certain that Greek and Syriac were used, but it is not so certain whether Arabic was. If it was, it must have been in such monasteries as were exclusively Arab, such as "the Monastery of the Ghassānids" or "the Monastery of the Arabs," since the exclusively ethnic Arab constitution of the monastery could suggest that.¹⁶⁹ The language of the letters sent by the Monophysite bishops to Oriens and to Arabia could provide material for the study of the problem of whether an Arabic version of the profession of faith was available to the "people of Arabia"¹⁷⁰ to whom the letter on the Tritheistic heresy was addressed in addition to its being addressed to the clerics of the Provincia.

Nöldeke did not address this question in his article. What is more, he went on to say that in this period "one did not dare to write a pair of words in Arabic": "Zu einer Zeit, in der die arabische Dichtkunst schon völlig ihre feste Form gefunden und sich so an den kleinen Höfen der Ghassāniden und Lachmiden hören liess, wagte man noch kaum, ein paar Worte arabisch zu schreiben."¹⁷¹ Little did he know when he wrote, that some twenty-five years

¹⁶⁷ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 442–43.

¹⁶⁸ As argued previously, Graeco-Roman, biblical, and Christian names are not evidence for the non-Arab ethnic background of the monks and priests, since they assumed such names on ordination. Nöldeke could identify only one truly Arabic name in the onomasticon of the archimandrites of Arabia—Khulayf. That the Arab origin of many of these archimandrites has been concealed under the cloak of these biblical names is evidenced in the *HE* of John of Ephesus, where he speaks of the exploits of "two blessed monks, both Arabs," whose names were Benjamin and Samuel. Had it not been for the testimony of John of Ephesus, their names would not have suggested that they were Arabs; see *HE*, VI. 19, p. 239, lines 18–20.

¹⁶⁹ For analogies, see "The Languages of the Liturgy in Palestine" in *BAFIC*, 196–99.

¹⁷⁰ That is, not only to the clerics. The Provincia Arabia was mostly Arab ethnographically, and although the "people of Arabia" used Aramaic in their inscriptions, as the Nabataean Arabs had done, there is no doubt that they also knew and spoke Arabic. Undoubtedly, the clerics knew Aramaic/Syriac, and so did many of the inhabitants of the Provincia, but that all of them did so is an unwarranted presumption. For the "people of Arabia" to whom the letter of the bishops concerning the Tritheistic controversy was sent, see *Documenta*, p. 142, line 21: "populo fideli Christum diligenti qui in Arabia habitat."

¹⁷¹ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 443.

later the region he discussed would yield the most glorious Arabic inscription of pre-Islamic times, the long Namāra inscription, dated as early as A.D. 328, at the very same place which he had thought presented only some crude Greek and Latin graffiti and inscriptions.¹⁷²

3. Finally, these subscriptions and the two letters related to them represent the climax in the group of documents that present the Ghassānids, especially Arethas, in an entirely new light. Historians of this period and of Arab-Byzantine relations, including Nöldeke, projected an image of Arethas as a federate warrior at the head of his troops fighting the battles of the oriental *limes*. This he certainly was, but he was much more. These documents reveal the other facet of his historical personality—protector of Monophysitism and patron of a vast network of monasteries in the Provincia Arabia. To its history as a military province in the imperial Diocese of Oriens is now added a new dimension, that of a province in the Monophysite Patriarchate of Antioch. Together with the precious passages preserved in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian on the subscription of his armies to orthodox Monophysitism, the *Documenta Monophysitarum* present him now as the commander-in-chief of a Monophysite army,¹⁷³ the only Monophysite army within the empire. This close involvement in the ecclesiastical history of Oriens and the empire provides one of the keys for understanding the reason why the Ghassānid *foederati* were so well integrated into the Byzantine society of Oriens. In addition to living in territory that had been demographically Arab for centuries, unlike the Roman Occident on the soil of which appeared the German *regna*, the Arab *foederati* immersed themselves totally not only in the wars of the empire but also in its theology, the soul of Byzantium, and so emerged as the protectors and patrons of Monophysite orthodoxy. And it is thus that Arethas makes his exit from the sources, not as a commander on the battlefield but as a Christian leader working for the peace of the church.

VI. THE MONASTERY AND THE CHURCH OF THE ARABS

A

In the correspondence among Monophysite ecclesiastics concerning the Trinitistic heresy, there occurs the name of a certain John, "the archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs." It occurs in the letter addressed by the bishops in Constantinople to the clerics of Oriens and in their reply to the same

¹⁷² For Nöldeke on Namāra, see *ibid.*, 437. Since the Namāra inscription was discovered, more inscriptions have been found in both Oriens (Bilād al-Shām) and the Arabian Peninsula, most remarkably at Faw, all of which suggests that the pre-Islamic Arabs were not as illiterate as scholars had thought.

¹⁷³ Thus the Ghassānid military camps, their *hīras* on the frontiers (the oriental *limes*), manned by troops faithfully wedded to the Monophysite confession, became something like the *ribāṭs* of later Islamic times; on *ribāṭ*, see *El*, III, s.v.

bishops.¹⁷⁴ In both cases, the Syriac for "Arabs" is *Ṭayāyē*, clearly reflecting the fact that these were not Rhomaic Arabs but *foederati*, since *Ṭayāyē* was the usual word used in the Syriac sources for the Ghassānids and the other federate Arabs. The two attestations of this archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs call for some observations and raise some questions relevant to the ministry of Theodore.

The geographical location of the monastery is not in Arabia but in Syria Prima in the north. This is clear from a statement in the reply of the archimandrites who describe themselves as "nosque omnes praefectos coenobiorum diocesis Antiochiae seu Theopolis."¹⁷⁵ Antioch belonged to Syria Prima. The archimandrites speak of the province of Antioch, although this was not the correct name. But as clerics, they want to relate themselves not so much to the secular imperial province but to the great Christian center, Antioch, and indeed they immediately describe it as Theopolis. The archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs is referred to as a presbyter since he is included in the list of presbyters, Syriac *qashīshē*, to whom the bishops addressed their letter.¹⁷⁶

The attestation of a monastery specifically and explicitly described as a monastery of the Arabs in the north near Antioch brings to mind the parallel case of another monastery of the same description, the monastery of the Ghassānids in the province of Arabia. Although the Ghassānid monasteries were singled out from the list of monasteries in the previous section, there was no guarantee that their inmates were Arabs since it could be argued that they were simply built, endowed, or patronized by the Ghassānids.¹⁷⁷ Thus the two monasteries of federate Arabs, one in the Provincia Arabia in the south and one in Syria Prima in the north, fall within the same category of federate Arab monasteries. But while the former is specifically called "the monastery of the Ghassānids," the latter is not so specifically named, and this raises the ques-

¹⁷⁴ See *Documenta*, versio, p. 101, line 24; p. 119, line 8; textus, p. 146, line 61 and p. 170, line 25.

The standard work on the monasteries of northern Syria is still E. Honigmann's article, "Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 1 (1922), 15–33; this should be supplemented by the same author's "Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum," *ZDPV* 47 (1924), 1–64, and E. Littmann, "Zur Topographie der Antiochene und Apamene," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 1 (1922), 163–95.

Honigmann noted this "monastery of the Arabs" in "Nordsyrische Klöster," 19, and the curious survival of the name in its Syriac form in these sources; see also *BAFOC*, 434 note 83.

¹⁷⁵ *Documenta*, versio, p. 116, lines 30–31; textus, p. 167, lines 17–18. The use of diocese in the Latin version is inaccurate and leads to confusion with the imperial Diocese of Oriens. The Syriac has the term "huparchia d'Antiochia," "the province of Antioch," "the eparchy of Antioch." The Syriac sources use *huparchia* instead of the regular and normal *eparchia* for province. The archimandrites of the letter are those of the province of Syria Prima, within the Diocese of Oriens.

¹⁷⁶ *Documenta*, versio, p. 101, line 19; textus, p. 146, line 1.

¹⁷⁷ For this list, see above, 825–35.

tion of the federate tribal affiliation of this monastery of the Arabs in Syria Prima, located far from the center of Ghassānid power. Syria Prima was the land of the Tanūkhids, the Arab federates of Byzantium in the fourth century, and they, too, were zealous Christians who had founded monasteries in the Land of the Two Rivers before they emigrated to Oriens. So, if Tanūkhid, its inmates must have gone over to Monophysitism, since the monastery was clearly Monophysite in the sixth century, when John was its archimandrite.¹⁷⁸

The attestation of at least two monasteries whose inmates were federate Arabs and the possibility, even probability, that one of the two, that in Syria Prima, was not Ghassānid but possibly Tanūkhid, a group that had come over to Monophysitism only in the sixth century, raises some important questions pertaining to the ministry of Theodore as bishop of the limitrophe and beyond in western Arabia. The previous Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens, the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively, had been touched by the monastic way of life, and some monasteries have been attributed to them.¹⁷⁹ These two groups flourished before the rise of Monophysitism and before the advent of the Ghassānids in Oriens. In 530 the Ghassānid king Arethas was given extraordinary jurisdiction over almost all the federates of Oriens, and a decade later, around 540, Theodore was given a similar jurisdiction over the same Arabs in the same area. Arethas united the *foederati* who fought under his command, and the question arises whether or not Theodore, the Monophysite missionary and bishop, did the same with the souls of the same federates. The case of the "Monastery of the Arabs" in Syria Prima suggests that he might have done something in that direction; how successful he was with the others is impossible to tell.

The Arab monastic establishment for the two centuries before the appearance of the Ghassānids had not been inconsiderable. There were Arab monastic pockets in the north in Chalcidicē, in the south in the Desert of Juda, in Sinai and in Palaestina Tertia, in the Ḥijāz, Madyan, Wādī al-Qurā, and the Ḥismā.¹⁸⁰ The Arab attachment to monasticism was vouched for in Syriac hagiographic sources. So what did Theodore do with this establishment which he inherited as the appointed bishop of the limitrophe and the federate Arabs? The sources again are silent, but it is not rash to conclude that he must have given it an impetus, especially as he himself had been a monk before he was called to the episcopate. What exactly he did is not on record, but he must have encouraged the spread of monasticism, especially as he was also an evangelist with a mandate after his consecration, and he knew that the monastery was a more effective means of conversion in the Arabian desert than the

¹⁷⁸ For the Tanūkhids and their Christianity, see *BAFOC*, 418–35.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, and *BAFIC*, 289–306.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

church. The 137 subscriptions in the letters of the archimandrites of the Provincia could be evidence for the achievement of Theodore: after a ministry of three decades, it contains an astounding number of monasteries. While it is not valid to say that this was the work of Theodore, it would not be invalid to say that he must have contributed to the spread of monasticism in the province over which he was bishop, where his patron and protector was Arethas, the king of the Ghassānids, with whom some monasteries are definitely associated.

More important than the preceding are the implications of the monastery's description as the "Monastery of the Arabs." It suggests a strong sense of identity and community as Arabs on the part of the monks who chose to live together with their fellow Arabs. These, it should be remembered, were not Rhomaic Arabs but federate Arabs, allies who had come from the Arabian Peninsula in fairly recent times. Although some of them, especially their phylarchs, acquired a knowledge of Syriac and Greek, the majority of the federate Arabs were most probably monolingual, and Arabic was their language for the affairs of everyday life. If so, the question arises concerning their devotional language. Did they have a simple Arabic liturgy which they celebrated through the community of the Arabic language? As has been mentioned earlier, this might have been the case if the example of other ethnic communities of monks is an indication, communities that belonged to one ethnic group such as the Armenians in the Desert of Juda.¹⁸¹

B

What was said of the monastery of the Arabs and its relation to the work of Theodore as a bishop of the limitrophe may be said of another Christian structure, namely, Kanīsat al-A^ʿrāb, "the Church of the Arabs," in Ma^ʿarrat al-Nu^ʿmān in Syria Prima. Ma^ʿarrat al-Nu^ʿmān has been previously examined with the view of ascertaining the tribal affiliation of two Christian structures, "the Church of the Arabs (al-A^ʿrāb)" and "Dayr al-Naqīra."¹⁸² The view was put forward that the town received its name from the Tanūkhid king al-Nu^ʿmān. This view can still be supported. But further research in the history of this locality suggests that it could also have been a Ghassānid town with Ghassānid associations.

While the Tanūkhid al-Nu^ʿmān is a shadowy figure, a mere name in a genealogical tree, the Ghassānid Nu^ʿmān is a large historical figure, well documented in contemporary Greek and Syriac sources. The name of the locality, "Ma^ʿarrat al-Nu^ʿmān," which is certainly Syriac for "Maghārat al-Nu^ʿmān" ("the Cave of Nu^ʿmān") may well be related to an episode in the life

¹⁸¹ See *BAFIC*, 196–99.

¹⁸² See *BAFOC*, 377–78, 434–35.

of Nu'mān, when he rebelled against the Byzantines in the 580s and could very well have taken refuge in a cave that gave its name to the locality. Furthermore, a previous chapter established some important links between Nu'mān and this locality—the inscription and the medallion of the cameleer.¹⁸³ So the Ghassānid association with Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān can be based on some solid ground, but it is also consonant with an earlier Tanūkhid association, since the locality could have had associations with the two federate groups.

The existence of a “Church of the Arabs” in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān in medieval Islamic times could point only to a pre-Islamic origin going back to the Tanūkhid or Ghassānid era. What is significant is its *federate* status in pre-Islamic Oriens and the light it throws on Christianity among the federate Arabs. Just as Theodore must have attended to the spread of monasticism, so must he have attended to the building of churches for the federates. As noted earlier, there is no list of Ghassānid Arab churches as there is for monasteries, only scattered references in the literary sources and some in epigraphy as in the Ḥarrān inscription.¹⁸⁴ So reference to this “Church of the Arabs” provides an example of the many churches that Theodore must have built for the Arab federates along the *limes*.

It will be remembered that Theodore was appointed, in the words of his biographer, John of Ephesus, to the *hīra* of the Ghassānids. The laconic statement can be easily understood to mean that he looked after the various military camps along the *limes* where the federate Arab troops were stationed from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat. So in one important sense Theodore was an “army chaplain” visiting the military encampments of the Ghassānids, and naturally building churches for the various sedentarized groups among the *foederati*. It must have been such churches that Arethas referred to when he restored Paul's name in the diptychs in the mid-560s.¹⁸⁵

Just as the sources are not explicit on how he organized the churches that he built, neither are they informative on how he spread or revived the faith in the limitrophe. The *Life* of Aḥūdemmeḥ, another sixth-century Monophysite missionary, who also operated among the Arabs in Mesopotamia, sheds light on how Theodore may have roughly approached the same problem. According to this *Life*, Aḥūdemmeḥ would appoint to each Arab group a deacon and a priest, build a church which would carry the name of the chief of the group, and encourage the Arabs to make endowments for the churches and the monasteries.¹⁸⁶ This is how Theodore must have spread the Christian faith among

¹⁸³ See *BASIC* I.1, 505–9.

¹⁸⁴ See *ibid.*, 325–31.

¹⁸⁵ See above, 802–3.

¹⁸⁶ On Aḥūdemmeḥ see *BAFOC*, 419–22.

the Arabs of the Outer Shield,¹⁸⁷ in the limitrophe and in Ḥijāz. On the analogy of what Aḥūdemmeḥ had done—and the two were contemporaries—Theodore would have built churches, each with a deacon and a priest, possibly bearing the name of the chief of the group, and endowed by them. This explains the Arab names that attach to such churches and monasteries in the sources such as Dayr Ḥabīb and Dayr Sa^cd.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps to this list may be added the “Church of Mundir” which appears in the list of 137 subscribers from the Province of Arabia. Thus an Arab federate hierarchy must have arisen with the ranks of deacon, priest, and bishop. The sources are not extant on the hierarchy of such Arab federate churches in Oriens, but one precious document has preserved a complete list of the hierarchy of an Arab church elsewhere, that of the city of Najrān in South Arabia in the sixth century.¹⁸⁹

As the number of churches and monasteries that Theodore built in the limitrophe, the Outer Shield, and northern Ḥijāz is shrouded in obscurity, so is the list of clerics he must have ordained. The list of monasteries has some 137 signatures, and those with Ghassānid associations have been singled out. Perhaps Theodore was responsible for the ordination of the clerics associated with these monasteries. As has been pointed out earlier, what is strictly a federate monastery or church is not clear even in the restricted list. Hence their priests cannot with certainty be related to ordinations by Theodore. What is more likely to be his are those clerics associated explicitly with the Arabs and the federates: (1) John, the priest and archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs in Syria Prima; (2) John, the priest and archimandrite of the monastery of the Ghassānids in the Provincia Arabia; (3) Eustathius, the priest of the Church of Mundir; (4) Antiochus, the archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs, and/or Antiochus of Arabia, if Antiochus stands for two different clerics.¹⁹⁰ The onomasticon of these clerics is noteworthy; while the Ghassānid and Arab phylarchs retained their strictly Arab names, the onomasticon of the ecclesiastical establishment was exclusively non-Arab and understandably biblical and Graeco-Roman.

VII. ANTIOCHUS OF ARABIA

In 567 the archimandrites of Oriens, especially Syria Prima, met at the convent of Mār Bassos in Bītabō, expressed their conformity with Monophysite orthodoxy against Tritheism, and supported the recently maligned patriarch of Antioch, Paul. Among the subscribers was a certain Antiochus, who is

¹⁸⁷ On the Outer Shield, see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

¹⁸⁸ See *BAFIC*, 296–300.

¹⁸⁹ For the Najrān hierarchy, see *Martyrs*, 64.

¹⁹⁰ For Antiochus, see the following section.

described as "the archimandrite of the Monastery of the Arabs." There is no doubt about his name Antiochus, or his description as an archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs, since he is referred to as such in another letter written by the same archimandrites.¹⁹¹

Coming at about the same time when the name of John,¹⁹² archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs, is attested twice in these Monophysite documents on the Tritheistic heresy, Antiochus presents a problem. Were there two monasteries in Syria Prima, both called "the Monastery of the Arabs?" It is possible but unlikely. One of the two archimandrites, probably John, may have died or for some reason did not sign again, and Antiochus substituted for him as the new archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs. This could be supported by the fact that in the first letter in which the name of Antiochus appears, the first subscriber, the archimandrite of the monastery of Mār Bassos, appears as Mares, while in the second, the archimandrite of the same monastery appears as Eusebius.¹⁹³

The name Antiochus appears again in the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, this time in the 570s when Paul, the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, travels to the court of Muṇḍir in Arabia during the strife that divided the Monophysite world into Paulites and Jacobites. At that court assembled a group of bishops and abbots who presented a petition through the Ghassānid Muṇḍir to a certain Antiochus, whom the *Documenta* call Mar Antiochus, for a thorough discussion of the strife that divided the two distinguished clerics. The reference to him in the *Documenta* reads as follows: "ut fiat negotii discussio et examen, sicut declarat protestatio ab eis data Mar Antiocho per gloriosum patricium Mundarum."¹⁹⁴

The identity of this Antiochus, clearly an important personage in the counsels of the Monophysite church and of Muṇḍir, has exercised the ingenuity of Brooks, Gerber, Chabot, and Honigmann.¹⁹⁵ Was he the same as his namesake, the archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs in the 560s? He could have been. His appearance at the court of the Arab king Muṇḍir is not decisive for predicating his Arab origin, but it could suggest it. Brooks¹⁹⁶ proposed that he might have been the archimandrite who had that name and who was the archimandrite of Gabtīl, one of the monasteries of the Provincia Arabia. If so, he could have been an Arab, since Nöldeke¹⁹⁷ suggested that this

¹⁹¹ See *Documenta*, versio, p. 113, line 30; p. 126, line 26; the word for *Arab* is the usual one for the non-Rhomaic federate Arabs, Ṭayyē.

¹⁹² On John see above, 838.

¹⁹³ See *Documenta*, p. 113, line 20; p. 126, line 16.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185, lines 5–7.

¹⁹⁵ See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 203 note 2.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Above, 830.

was a South Arabian name given to the place by a South Arabian group that had hailed from the Arabian south, where the name is attested.

The name Antiochus appears for the fourth time in a late Syriac source, in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, in connection with the conference of Callinicum in 567, convened by the patrician John, the emissary of Justin II. The words of the historian read as follows in the French version: "Quand le patrice Jean arriva, il réunit Palladius, archimandrite de Mar Bassus, Antiochius d'Arabie, Jean de Qârtamin, et d'autres hommes et clercs célèbres."¹⁹⁸

It is clear from the passage in Michael that Antiochus was an important cleric, since he was not simply implied anonymously in the phrase "clercs célèbres" but was, together with the other two, singled out by name. So who was this Antiochus? Is he to be identified with his namesake of the monastery of the Arabs? Is he to be identified with the Antiochus to whom was handed the petition at the court of Mundîr? Since he appears as an important figure both at Callinicum and at the court of Mundîr, it is tempting to think that these two names represented one person, and since the reference in Michael states that his residence was Arabia, Mâr Antiochus could have come from Arabia, possibly from the monastery of Gabtîl, close to the court of Mundîr.

Thus there may have been two Antiochuses: the archimandrite of the monastery of the Arabs in Syria Prima and Antiochus of the Provincia Arabia, who was present both at Callinicum and at the court of Mundîr; the former being definitely Arab, while the latter being possibly so. The two Antiochuses can be reduced to one, if it turns out that Michael the Syrian did not express himself carefully when he described his Antiochus as hailing from "Arabia" instead of saying "of the Arabs," that is, "the Monastery of the Arabs."¹⁹⁹ If this identification of the two Antiochuses with each other proves correct, then the archimandrite of "the Monastery of the Arabs," presumably under the jurisdiction of, and possibly placed there by, Theodore, must have been an important figure in the affairs of the Monophysite church, appearing at the conference of Callinicum in connection with the Tritheistic heresy and at the court of Mundîr in order to participate in the negotiations conducted for the reconciliation of Paul with Jacob.

VIII. ABŪ KARIB AND THEODORE:

CODEx SYRIACUS DLXXXV, THEOLOGY, BRITISH MUSEUM

The collaboration of Bishop Theodore with Arethas in the service of the Monophysite church leads to a discussion of his association with another

¹⁹⁸ *Chronique*, II, 287.

¹⁹⁹ Honigmann (*Évêques*, 203 note 3) noted the difficulty of identifying the two on the ground that they belonged to two different provinces. But the difficulty would disappear if Michael indeed confused "Arabia" with "the Arabs."

Ghassānid figure, Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia. This Ghassānid was discussed previously in Part One dealing with political and military history, but, like Arethas, he also played a role in the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in Oriens in the sixth century. It is therefore necessary to discuss this role, scant and exiguous as the sources on him are. As he was the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, the vast province that comprised both Sinai and parts of northern Ḥijāz, he must have been associated with Theodore and his mission as the bishop of the Arabs, since this very area fell within Theodore's episcopal jurisdiction. Before discussing this association, it is necessary to dispose of the problem of identifying occurrences in the sources of the name Abū Karib, which, it will be argued, are all references to one and the same person, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia.

A

A previous section in this volume compared the Greek literary account of Procopius with the epigraphic evidence of the Sabaic Dam inscription. The resulting conclusion was that the Arab federate phylarch of Palaestina Tertia mentioned by Procopius, around 530, was a Ghassānid, the brother of the better-known Arethas. The Sabaic inscription confirmed that he was alive around 540 and important enough to send an independent envoy to the court of Abraha in Ma'rib in South Arabia.²⁰⁰

A new light is shed on this Ghassānid figure by a Syriac manuscript found together with others in al-Nabk between Damascus and Palmyra and which W. Wright noticed in his *Catalogue*. Reference to Abū Karib appears in a marginal note on a homily that forms part of codex DLXXXV in the section of the catalogue on theology, the commentary of John Chrysostom on the Gospel of Matthew. The note, in Wright's words, "informs us that the manuscript belonged to the monastery of Nāṭphā of Zagal, near Tadmur or Palmyra; and that it was written at the expense of the abbot Simeon and the brotherhood, in the days of the bishops Jacob and Theodore, when Abū Karib was king."²⁰¹

Nöldeke noted this manuscript and drew on it when writing his monograph on the Ghassānids, thus drawing attention to its relevance to this history.²⁰² He rightly disregarded what Caussin de Perceval and Assemani had written on Abū Karib as utterly inaccurate, which Wright had quoted; he also corrected "Nāṭphā" in the text and in Wright's note into Nabk, the village

²⁰⁰ For Abū Karib in the political and diplomatic history of this period, see *BASIC* I.1, 124–31.

²⁰¹ See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1871), part II, p. 468.

²⁰² See Nöldeke, *GF*, 26–27.

that lies between Damascus and Palmyra. But he groped in the dark in his attempt to identify the Abū Karib mentioned in this marginal note. He could not identify him with the Abū Karib mentioned by Procopius, since the latter did not answer to the description of the Abū Karib in the manuscript, and so Nöldeke was forced to identify him either with Arethas himself or with Munḍir his son, assuming that either could have been known by the tecnonymic Abū Karib. This was, of course, a counsel of despair, at the time. There is no evidence that either Arethas or his son Munḍir was called by such a tecnonymic.²⁰³ Besides, at the time that this manuscript was written, Munḍir had not yet become king; this is clear from the reference to Theodore in the marginal note since Theodore died in 570, while Munḍir became king only then, and it is difficult to maintain that the manuscript was written in 570. The presumption is that it was written before that date; hence Munḍir is excluded as the king referred to by his tecnonymic in the manuscript as Abū Karib. Nöldeke wrote at a time when knowledge of the career of Theodore was inadequately known, and he was unaware that he died in 570. Hence he appealed to the death of Jacob in 578 as the terminus for dating the manuscript,²⁰⁴ and this enabled him to think that Munḍir could have been the one referred to in the marginal note, since by that date Munḍir had reigned for some eight years. The Sabaic inscription referred to above has shed new light on Abū Karib as an important figure that was still alive in the 540s. So the reference in the marginal note could only be to him and not to his brother Arethas. Thus the Sabaic inscription and the death of Theodore in 570 have both invalidated Nöldeke's identifications and have excluded both Arethas and Munḍir from the process of identification.²⁰⁵

B

The relevance of this marginal note to the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids is considerable, and the following data may be extracted from it.

1. That the manuscript is dated to the time of bishops²⁰⁶ Jacob and Theodore is significant. The fact reflects the importance of their episcopate in the history of the Monophysite church, so much so that it became a chrono-

²⁰³ Both, especially the former, were well known by their patronymics, Arethas as "the son of Jabala" and Munḍir as "the son of Arethas." In the *Chronicle* of Zacharia of Mytilene, Arethas even appears without his name and is referred to only by his patronymic, in Syriac, Bar-Jabala; see Zacharia, *HE*, p. 67, lines 25–27.

²⁰⁴ The death of Theodore ca. 570 should thus be the terminus ante quem for dating the manuscript, not that of Jacob, which took place some eight years later.

²⁰⁵ E. Glaser, who discovered and published the Sabaic inscription, identified the Abū Karib of the inscription with that of Procopius and the Syriac manuscript; Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1216) entertained as only possible both Nöldeke's and Glaser's identifications.

²⁰⁶ In Syriac, "*bi-yōmai qadishê apīsqūpê sharivê*," "in the days of the holy and true bishops, Mār Jacob and Mār Theodore."

logical era for dating instead of doing so through reference to the reigning Dyophysite *basileus* or to one of the many eras used in the region, such as the Era of Bostra, Pompey, or the Seleucids. This invites comparison with the dating of the establishment of another monastery by the *phylarchia* of Arethas.²⁰⁷ Thus two Monophysite monasteries date events in their history through reference to the Ghassānid phylarch and the Ghassānid bishop respectively. Noteworthy in the Syriac text is the word *shbrirē*, “true,” which together with *qadishē* describe the two bishops. For the Monophysites, the consecration of Jacob and Theodore was canonical and they were, unlike the Dyophysite perception of them, truly consecrated bishops. The use of the term perhaps reflects that the canonicity of their consecration was of topical interest then. The striking sentence in the Syriac marginal note, however, is the following: “May the Lord with their prayers (i.e., Jacob and Theodore) have mercy on the King Abū Karib and on his believing brothers. And may you, O Lord, bring back the erring among them to the knowledge of truth.”

2. Neither Procopius nor the Sabaic inscription gives any inkling as to the religious persuasion of Abū Karib. But this Syriac note does, as it clearly reveals him to have been a Christian committed to orthodox Monophysitism, presumably of the Severan type,²⁰⁸ and, moreover, unites him with Theodore. This is the meaning of the term “believing” in the Syriac text. Although it could be easily inferred from the sources that the Monophysite clergy must have prayed for the Ghassānid Arethas and that his name was in the diptychs, in view of his contributions to the welfare of that church, there is no express reference to this in the sources. It is, therefore, good to have this invocation for the Ghassānid phylarch and his brothers expressly stated. The invocation reflects the place of the Ghassānid royal house in the thoughts and affection of the Monophysite community.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ See *BASIC* I.1, 259–60.

²⁰⁸ Reference to him as king is also noteworthy. Among the federates, his brother Arethas was the king, par excellence, especially after the extraordinary *Basileia* that was conferred on him by Justinian ca. 530. This marginal note provides a new and valuable datum on Abū Karib, who was known from Procopius as having been made a phylarch of Palaestina Tertia. However, he was a distinguished phylarch within the Arab federate presence in Oriens, and this is clear from his sending an ambassador to Abraha in South Arabia, just as his brother Arethas sent one of his own. Thus he could have been considered a king and referred to as such by the Monophysites of the region as well as by his own troops. That the title *basileus*, granted the federate chiefs, was graded in Byzantium may be seen from the conferment of a higher-grade crown to Mundir by Tiberius in 580; see *ibid.*, 398–406.

²⁰⁹ Incidentally, the marginal note testifies to the large number of brothers that Abū Karib had; the plural is used both of those who were “believing” and those who were “in error.” So Jabala must have had an abundant household, and all these brothers must have been phylarchs who functioned simultaneously, a fact that may be kept in mind when studying the genealogical tree of the Ghassānids in Ḥamza. Some members may have been brothers rather than members of the house related to one another lineally.

3. Most interesting is the reference to the two groups of brothers, those who are "believing" and those "in error." This reveals a crack in the Ghassānid dynasty, which usually appears as a monolith. But here there is evidence that some of the princes or phylarchs must have been lured away from the path of strict Severan orthodoxy. Were they lured to Dyophysitism, as when Ephraim, the patriarch of Antioch, tried to convert Arethas to the Chalcedonian position in the late 530s? Or was it to the Phantasiast or to the Tritheistic position within Monophysitism? There is no way of telling. In the 560s Theodore dealt with Monophysites who went over to the Chalcedonian position but later returned to the Monophysite fold.²¹⁰ And after the fall of Mundir in the early 580s, one of his brothers who apparently became a Chalcedonian was temporarily installed in his place.²¹¹ So the chances are that what is involved here is conversion to the Chalcedonian position. This position is what would have attracted the Ghassānid phylarchs because of their relations to their overlords who were Chalcedonian.

Noteworthy is the tolerance of the Ghassānids toward those who decided to go over to other doctrinal persuasions. They did not force them to return. These apparently felt free to do so if they so wished, and the ecclesiastical community could only pray for their return to the fold. The relevance of all this to Theodore and his mission in Ḥijāz should be clear now. The Syrian manuscript has added a new dimension to the historical personality of Abū Karib. He emerges as a Christian ruler and an important one, as important in his jurisdiction as his brother Arethas was in his. The two brothers were in contact with each other,²¹² and it is natural to suppose that Abū Karib emulated the example of his brother in his zeal for the preservation and propagation of the Christian faith in its Monophysite version.²¹³

Palaestina Tertia and Ḥijāz were open for Theodore's missionary activity. Ḥijāz was a Byzantine and a Ghassānid sphere of influence, especially after the Monophysite victory in South Arabia over Yūsuf, the Judaizing king of Ḥimyar. Abū Karib had presented Justinian with Phoinikōn, in Ḥijāz, the date palm oasis, and there were other Azdite pockets²¹⁴ in Medina, Mecca, and Najrān amenable to Ghassānid influence. Imperial economic and political plans for western Arabia coincided with spreading the Christian faith there. And it is difficult to think that Theodore would have been inactive in this region during his long episcope of three decades. If the Ghassānids did

²¹⁰ See below, 858–59.

²¹¹ See *BASIC* I.1, 471–75.

²¹² Reflected in the scant sources by their dispatch of two ambassadors to the court of Abraha in South Arabia.

²¹³ On the survival of an echo of this in the Arabic sources which deal with the propagation of Christianity in South Arabia earlier in the century, see above, 710–11.

²¹⁴ The Ghassānids belonged to the large tribal group, Azd.

something to propagate the Christian faith in Ḥijāz, they would have done it during this time, which was also its golden period. Before Theodore, the Ghassānid church was not so well organized, and after him it entered into a period of eclipse, as the career of his successor, John, will show.²¹⁵ So if Theodore did missionary work in Ḥijāz, it would have been in the first twenty years of his episcopate before he became involved in the problems of the Monophysite church within Oriens in the 560s. But what exactly he did in Ḥijāz cannot be stated precisely. He might have developed some Christian centers that had existed before him, and he may have initiated new ones. It is tempting to think that Masājid Maryam in Ḥijāz,²¹⁶ near Mecca, may go back to his missionary activities. The Monophysite ecclesiastics went out of their way to emphasize the place of Mary in their theology by always ending their letters with the invocation of the name Maryam, the Mother of God, as their intercessor.

IX. THEODORE, THE ARAB BISHOP OF THE LIMITROPHE, CA. 540–570

The name of Theodore is inseparably linked with that of Jacob Baradaeus from the time both were consecrated around 540 until Theodore's death around 570. But while the sources are abundant and informative on Jacob throughout his ministry of some forty years (d. 578), they are not so on Theodore; what is more, they are sporadic and their narrative is intermittent.²¹⁷ This may partly explain why Theodore has found no biographers, unlike Jacob, whose career has always attracted the attention of ecclesiastical historians in addition to the fact that Jacob was the more important of the two.²¹⁸ But in his own way Theodore was important both for his role in the Arab sector of Oriens and the Near East and also for his role in the Monophysite movement. It is therefore necessary to give some attention to the career of Jacob's colleague, who was the principal figure in federate Arab ecclesiastical history in the sixth century.

Previous sections in this volume²¹⁹ have examined in detail what has sur-

²¹⁵ See below, 869–75.

²¹⁶ On this see *BAFIC*, 294–95.

²¹⁷ This is reflected even in the primary source for Theodore, namely, John of Ephesus. In his *Life of James and Theodore*, Jacob (James) receives the lion's share, while Theodore is given short shrift. Although he must have given Theodore some attention in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in his account of the events of the reign of Justinian, Jacob's mission, not Theodore's, was John's main concern, and he was of course better informed about the former's mission than the latter's, which unfolded in the distant limitrophe and in western Arabia.

²¹⁸ This is clearly reflected in the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, where he is referred to as "primus inter episcopos." Although both were consecrated in order that they might ordain other clergy, yet it was Jacob alone to whom a letter, sometime in the 540s, was addressed by Patriarch Anthimus concerning ordinations: see F. Nau, "Littérature canonique syriaque inédite," *ROC*, ser. 2, 14 (1909), 123–24.

²¹⁹ Above, 761–68, 806–8.

vived in the sources on Theodore, his consecration around 540 and his involvement in the Tritheistic heresy. It remains to present as succinctly as possible a resumé of his career in its entirety. This is all the more important in view of the fact that he is an opaque figure to ecclesiastical historians and even to specialists on the Monophysite movement to which he belonged. Honigmann was the only scholar to give him some prominence by according him separate treatment instead of the marginal references to him in general church histories. But the treatment is utterly cursory and inadequate, coming as it does from a distinguished scholar but one who had vague conceptions of the Ghassānids of whom Theodore was bishop.²²⁰ The appearance of an article on Jacob, the other member of the pair, which gave an excellent evaluation of him, calls now for the better understanding of the place of his colleague, Theodore.²²¹ So this section is a contribution in the same direction, the exploration of the various dimensions of his career. It is hoped that this brief discussion will be the basis for a more detailed treatment of Theodore by ecclesiastical historians.

A

Theodore had been a monk in Constantinople before he was consecrated bishop. It is natural to assume that his monastic training is reflected in the spread of monasticism in the area of his jurisdiction, in the Byzantine limítrophe, the north Arabian Outer Shield,²²² and western Arabia in Ḥijāz. Monasteries certainly existed in this Arab area before the episcopate of Theodore, but as a former monk he must have contributed to the growth of the monastic establishment. How many monasteries can be attributed to his initiative is impossible to tell.²²³

Around 540 he was consecrated bishop together with Jacob. As he hailed from the Provincia Arabia, he was probably a Rhomaic Arab, who spoke Arabic; hence his assignment to the Arab area over which the Ghassānids

²²⁰ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 163–64. As a detailed treatment of the career of Theodore has been undertaken in this volume, there is no need to go through Honigmann's mistakes and inaccuracies in the two pages he devoted to Theodore. By the time Honigmann wrote his *Évêques*, the Syriac *Documenta* had been translated into Latin by Father Chabot. The frequent references to Theodore in those documents alone could have inspired Honigmann to have a more adequate perception of Theodore's place in the ecclesiastical history of the period.

²²¹ See Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus," 45–86.

Understandably, I. Engelhardt could write in *Mission und Politik in Byzanz* (p. 92): "sonst ist nichts über seine Aktivität in Arabien und Palästina bekannt." It is hoped that this section on Theodore, the conclusions of which have only inferential validity, might fill part of the vacuum in the history of the Monophysite mission in the 6th century.

²²² For the Outer Shield, see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

²²³ The difficulty of "precise attributions" and of "chronological pinpointing" that faces the student of the *limes* of Chalcis also faces students of the Arab monastic establishment in the limítrophe and in Ḥijāz. On the former, see *BAFOC*, 468.

presided within the *limes* directly and without it indirectly. Specifically this may be described as comprising the Byzantine limitrophe, roughly from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, the north Arabian Outer Shield, and Ḥijāz in western Arabia. Primarily he was the bishop of the federate Ghassānids and possibly other non-Ghassānid federates within the *limes*, and thus his episcopate fell within the jurisdiction of the Monophysite Patriarchate of Antioch in Oriens. But his mission as an evangelist must have extended beyond the *limes* in north Arabia and Ḥijāz.

Most probably Jābiya, the main seat of the Ghassānids, was his see, where he normally resided, but his assignment to the federate Ghassānids made him a sort of "army chaplain" who would visit the various military encampments of the Ghassānids along the *limes* and within the limitrophe. But this does not make him an itinerant bishop without a fixed see. Jābiya, in the Golān of Palaestina Secunda, was most probably his see. His association with Bostra as its bishop in one *Vita* is controversial. After his consecration he almost certainly never resided there in the 540s but could have done so later in his career; at least in the perception of the Monophysite hagiographers, he was the bishop of Bostra and such was possibly his own self-image. Jacob was always described as the bishop of Edessa, although he never resided or dared to reside there. And the two Monophysite patriarchs, Sergius and Paul, never resided in Antioch. As the Phantasiasts later on consecrated a bishop of their own and called him the bishop of Bostra,²²⁴ it is not unlikely that the Severan Monophysites, to whom Theodore belonged, also acted similarly in declaring Theodore a bishop of Bostra. But as late as 564 in his letter to Paul, the newly elected patriarch of Antioch, he signs as Theodore, bishop from Oriens. This is a primary document as well as his own self-description and should therefore be the safest guide to his jurisdiction. As has been indicated, he was the bishop of the Arab area, tripartite in its structure; but in an ecclesiastical document such as this letter addressed to Paul, he emphasizes his affiliation with the Monophysite church in Byzantium, with the Diocese of Oriens, almost coterminous with the Patriarchate of Antioch, of which Paul had just been elected the incumbent. Hence the appropriateness and validity of this subscription, which allies him with Oriens.

Much is known about Theodore in the 560s but hardly anything in the course of the twenty years that preceded them and that followed his consecration around 540. He surely must have been very active then in view of two facts: he was ubiquitous in the 560s when he had become old, so he must

²²⁴ See R. Dragnet, "L'ordination frauduleuse des Julianistes," *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), p. 78, line 16. In his French translation of the Syriac document, Syriac Buṣrā (Bostra) appears erroneously transliterated as Bassora (*ibid.*, 86), which normally stands for the Muslim city in Iraq, al-Baṣra.

have been at least as active when he was very much younger; his consecration took place amidst unusual circumstances and great expectations that called for some activity on his part, related to the determination of the Monophysites to revive their church and activate its mission after the ranks of their clergy had been decimated by Chalcedonian persecutions; he and Jacob were consecrated with a clear mandate. Jacob's activity is known, and he carried out his mandate. His colleague must have acted similarly, and the silence of the sources does not argue against his activity in the Arab area. This was the period when Justinian was trying hard to reconcile the Monophysites and restore the ecclesiastical unity of the empire, and finally he became one himself, with his Aphthartodocetism. There is no mention in the sources of any activity that associates Theodore the Monophysite with Justinian's endeavors, and he certainly did not attend the Council of Constantinople in 553. The natural presumption is that Theodore was busy elsewhere, attending to his primary assignment in the Arab area. Indeed, his intense involvement in *non-Arab* Monophysite matters in the 560s suggests that, after twenty years of ministering to the needs of the Arab area, he had accomplished his life's work and could pay some attention to the fortunes of the Monophysite church in Byzantium.

In spite of the scantiness of the sources for Theodore's activity in the Byzantine-Ghassānid limitrophe, there can be no doubt about its reality. What is not so clear and needs further argumentation is his activity in western Arabia, especially Ḥijāz. This is the region that turned out to be the crucial one in Arabia for Byzantium in the seventh century, since it was the birthplace of Islam.²²⁵ Something has been said on what must have been the mission of Theodore in Ḥijāz in the section on Abū Karib, and it has been argued that the energetic Ghassānid Monophysite phylarch must have put himself at the disposal of the Ghassānid church for missionary activity in his sphere of influence, Ḥijāz. This argument needs to be buttressed in this context with others.

His colleague, Julian, was consecrated bishop of Nubia about this time too (542), and he succeeded in the conversion of a vast tract of the Nile Valley to Monophysitism. Julian, and later Longinus, the other bishop of Nubia, were closely associated with their Severan Monophysite colleagues in Oriens, and their names appear in the Monophysite documents in connection with such controversies as that of the Tritheistic heresy; Longinus was known personally to the Ghassānid phylarchs whose military camp he visited.²²⁶ It is difficult to believe that Theodore failed to do on the eastern littoral of the Red Sea what Julian and Longinus did on the western.

²²⁵ See T. Mommsen's penetrating observation, already referred to by the present writer in *RA*, 18 note 2.

²²⁶ See below, 882–84.

If this inference on Theodore's activity in Ḥijāz proves valid, then Theodore would take his place alongside the other apostles of Monophysitism who in the sixth century were propagating Christianity in various regions in the Near East, such as John of Ephesus in Anatolia, Jacob in Anatolia and elsewhere, Aḥūdemmeḥ in Mesopotamia, and Julian in Nubia.²²⁷ The missionary work of Julian is closest to that of Theodore, since it involved the Red Sea area where Julian, through his conversion of Nubia, was able to close the gap that existed in the valley of the Nile between Ethiopia and Egypt, already won to Monophysitism. Likewise, Theodore might have tried to close another gap on the eastern littoral of the Red Sea, that represented by Ḥijāz which lay between already Christianized South Arabia and Palaestina Tertia, but the task was difficult in view of the many well-entrenched Jewish communities in the various oases of Ḥijāz and the resistance of Mecca to conversion. Since Ḥijāz became Byzantium's Achilles' heel in the seventh century, the success or failure of Theodore's mission becomes extremely important. Whatever he might have done and whatever his success was, the mission and ministry of Theodore is a link in a chain which represents the strong impetus that Christianity among the Arabs and in the Arabian Peninsula was receiving in the sixth century and which invites comparison with the impetus given to Judaism in the fifth, witnessed to by Sozomen.²²⁸ Whether this mission in Ḥijāz can be related to such military expeditions such as the Ghassānid thrust against the Jewish oases Taymā³ and Khaybar and Abraha's expedition against Mecca remains to be seen.²²⁹

Equally important is the ministry of Monophysite Aḥūdemmeḥ, the metropolitan of Takrīt in Persian Mesopotamia. Aḥūdemmeḥ shared with Julian the fact that both were consecrated bishops with the express purpose of spreading the Christian faith in its Monophysite version, and they succeeded in so doing in their respective areas. But Aḥūdemmeḥ's career throws more light on the mission of Theodore in Ḥijāz, because he was consecrated bishop of the Arabs of Mesopotamia and beyond the *limes*. Luckily, and unlike Theodore, he found a biographer who left an account of his mission among the Arabs, including a detailed account of the churches and monasteries he built and the deacons and priests he ordained for them.²³⁰ As these details are lacking for the ministry of Theodore, it may be safely assumed that Theodore's ministry in proselytizing and spreading the faith followed similar lines. More-

²²⁷ For Julian, the monk who converted Nubia ca. 541, and for Longinus, consecrated bishop for the Nubians, John of Ephesus is the main source; see Frend, *Rise*, 298–301. Theodore, of course, also takes his place alongside the other bishops of the Arab *foederati* in the 4th and 5th centuries; *BAFOC*, 330–37; *BAFIC*, 214–18.

²²⁸ See *BAFIC*, 175.

²²⁹ For this see *BASIC II*.

²³⁰ On Aḥūdemmeḥ's mission among the Arabs, see *BAFOC*, 461.

over, Aḥūdemmeḥ was consecrated by Jacob Baradaeus, Theodore's colleague,²³¹ and so a link is established between Theodore and Aḥūdemmeḥ, the two bishops of the Arabs in Byzantium and Persia. When it is remembered that Aḥūdemmeḥ's consecration took place in 557/58, that is, after Theodore had spent almost two decades in his ministry in the Arab area, it is not altogether inconceivable that Theodore's ministry was the model for Aḥūdemmeḥ's, and so the details that the biographer of Aḥūdemmeḥ has included in his *Life* were actually in imitation of those that Theodore had employed in the propagation of Christianity among the Arabs in Oriens. Jacob, Theodore's colleague who consecrated Aḥūdemmeḥ, could easily have advised him on the propagation of Christianity among the same people that Theodore had been assigned to in the past two decades.

Finally, Theodore's mission in Ḥijāz may be supported by appealing to that of the Nestorians in Persian territory. These had succeeded in spreading the Christian faith in its Nestorian version in the eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The Monophysites were their most active rivals, and Monophysite aggressiveness in missionary activity is reflected in the consecration of Aḥūdemmeḥ to propagate Monophysitism in northern Mesopotamia in Persian territory, which the Nestorians considered their own backyard and the sphere of political domination of their protectors, the Persians. But western Arabia was a sphere of Byzantine influence, and it is inconceivable that the Monophysites would not have seized the opportunity to spread their version of Christianity in this region of Arabia, in the context of the struggle for Arabia between the two rival Christian confessions. The 520s witnessed the fall of the southern part of western Arabia to Monophysitism, and only Ḥijāz, the northern part, remained mostly unconverted. This was Theodore's opportunity, especially after almost the whole of the Red Sea area had been won over by Monophysite missionaries, Theodore's contemporaries.

Theodore's mission must have been difficult and was probably not crowned with success. No doubt it struck the hard core of Jewish resistance in the oases of Ḥijāz, inhabited by Israelite communities, well established probably since the sixth century B.C., while further south it must have struck another pocket of hard resistance in Mecca, where Arab Ishmaelism and Abrahamism had also been established.²³² Christianity could only leave faint traces of itself in Jewish Medina and Arab Mecca.²³³ The monastery, therefore,

²³¹ On this see F. Nau, PO 3 (Paris, 1909), p. 20 note 3.

²³² On the Ishmaelism and Abrahamism of the Arabs, see *BAFIC*, 332–49.

²³³ On Medina see *BASIC* II; on Mecca see *BAFIC*, 390–92. The puzzle presented by what Cheikho called Mawqif al-Naṣrānī in Mecca (*ibid.*, 391 note 2) is no longer a puzzle. This is really Mawqif al-Naṣārā, a station on the Muslim pilgrimage route from 'Arafāt to Minā, also called Wādī al-Muḥassir; and so it is not a place in Mecca as suggested by Cheikho. It will be discussed in *BASIC* II.

rather than the church, represented Christianity in Ḥijāz and in areas outside Mecca and the Jewish oases, especially Medina.²³⁴

Conclusions on what Theodore did in these twenty years in Ḥijāz must remain speculative and their validity inferential. They constitute no real evidence for what he actually did in Ḥijāz but can only suggest it. Confirmation of these conclusions can come only from archaeology, and the case of Nubia is illuminating. The few references in the sources of this period to the propagation of Christianity among the Nubians has been confirmed by archaeology,²³⁵ and archaeological research in the Arab area of the ministry of Theodore may produce similar results.

However, even before archaeology can produce the desired evidence for Theodore's mission, there are scattered in the extant literary sources a few references that might reflect traces of his mission. A bishop with a mandate such as Theodore's would have been active in building churches and monasteries and in ordaining priests and deacons. These may be detected in the sources as follows.

The Arabic sources are informative on Arab monasteries, such as those in Madyan, Wādī al-Qurā, near Medina, in Ḥijāz, and in Palaestina Tertia, Arabia, and Chalcidicē in the limitrophe. The Syriac sources, notably the list of subscriptions in the letter of the archimandrites of the Provincia Arabia on the Tritheistic heresy, analyzed earlier in detail,²³⁶ with its vast number of monasteries in the Provincia and in some adjacent regions in Phoenicia and Palaestina Secunda, are the most eloquent testimony for what must have been at least partly the initiative of Theodore in promoting monasticism in the Ghassānid province par excellence, Arabia.

Churches are harder to enumerate since no list has survived comparable to that for the monasteries. Yet traces of Ghassānid Monophysite churches are traceable in the sources, while reference to specific church building during his ministry may be referred to in one of the subscriptions of the archimandrites of Arabia, that of Eustathius, who described himself as the priest of the church of Mundir. This is dated circa 570, and the church must have been built before then, and so falls within the time span of Theodore's ministry.²³⁷

Jacob ordained a vast number of Monophysite clergy in his area, and, while Theodore could not have come even within measurable distance of the number of those that Jacob ordained, he did ordain some clergy. These were

²³⁴ On the monastery of the Mujrimūn, Dayr al-Mujrimin in Medina, see *BASIC II*.

²³⁵ For the work of the Polish archaeological mission in Nubia, see the bibliography for chapter 8 in Frend, *Rise*, 390–91.

²³⁶ See above, 824–38.

²³⁷ That federate churches were built not only at the initiative of Theodore is clearly reflected in the Ḥarrān inscription, which commemorates the building of a *martyrion* by a phylarch, Sharāḥīl; see above, 701.

most probably the archimandrites of the Arab or Ghassānid monasteries mentioned in the subscriptions of the monasteries in the Provincia Arabia, possibly those of the monasteries of the Arabs in Syria Prima, and the Antiochuses mentioned for the Provincia. Thus after twenty years of active service, it is possible to say that there arose an organized Arab church with a hierarchy of its own composed of the ranking bishop Theodore, and with priests and deacons under him in the various churches and monasteries in the limitrophe.²³⁸ No *Notitia Ghassanica* or *Arabica* has survived for the limitrophe to inform the student of this problem and this period on the Arab church of the limitrophe in the sixth century. But a church of this description did exist, organized and administered by Theodore for some thirty years, apparently from his see at Jābiya, which thus now emerges not only as the main military headquarters of the Ghassānid federate phylarch but also as the see of the bishop of the Arab federates in Oriens.

The missionary saga of the Monophysite church in the sixth century is well known. That church was making conquests in many directions of the Near East such as the valley of the Nile and Ḥimyarite South Arabia. Not so well known is that Arab sector in Oriens and in Ḥijāz, and it is likely to remain so unless and until archaeological research has performed its task. In the meantime, it is hoped that this discussion and the previous ones involving Theodore have thrown some light on the obscurity that shrouds what might be termed the "unknown mission" of Theodore in Arabia.

B

The preceding section has treated Theodore's mission to the Arabs, and it remains now to discuss his activity in the non-Arab sector in Oriens, within the Monophysite church in Byzantium. The sources begin to be abundant and informative on Theodore in the 560s, unlike their silence on him in the preceding fifteen years. Theodore appears as an active member of the Monophysite church in Oriens and in the capital and takes part in important issues that concerned that church and also divided it. His role may be summarized as follows.

The Patriarchate of Antioch had been vacant and had no Monophysite incumbent since the deposition of Severus in 518 and no incumbent *extra muros* since his death in 538. Some twenty years after his death, Theodosius attended to this problem and succeeded in having two Monophysites consecrated as the Monophysite patriarchs of Antioch, Sergius in the late 550s and Paul in the early 560s.

Theodore's involvement in the patriarchate of Paul is documented. Al-

²³⁸ The sources have preserved a list of only one Arab church with its complete hierarchy, that of Najrān; see *Martyrs*, 64.

though he was absent from Constantinople when the initial moves were begun for the consecration of Paul, his phylarch, Arethas, with whom he was in contact, was in the capital and was involved, while he himself wrote Paul a letter of support after the latter's consecration, which has been preserved. Arethas' letter to Jacob Baradaeus concerning Paul has also been preserved. So the bishop and his king were both involved in Paul's patriarchate over Antioch. As far as the previous patriarchate of Sergius over Antioch is concerned, little is known about it. The extant sources do not mention king or bishop, but in view of the record of both in the patriarchate of Paul some three years after the death of Sergius, it is natural to assume that they must have been involved in that one as well.

More important and more indicative of the place of Theodore in the fortunes of the Monophysite church was his active role in dealing with the divisive movements that had rocked the Monophysite church, the orthodox Severan Monophysite church in the Orient, which comprised the Tritheists, the Phantasiasts, and the Secessionists who went over to the Chalcedonian position.

The best documented of all these divisive movements, as far as Theodore's involvement in it, is the Tritheistic movement. He participated in all the various phases of attempts to deal with it, both the Monophysite and the imperial, in Constantinople and in Callinicum. The imperial government collaborated with Severan Monophysitism in fighting Tritheism partly for taking a united stand with Monophysitism in the hope that this would lead to final reconciliation between the Dyophysite and the Monophysite churches and thus unite the empire doctrinally. In this aspect of the problem, Theodore had for the first and last time, perhaps, had the edge over Jacob Baradaeus in importance, since the imperial government of Justin II realized that behind Theodore lay the power of the redoubtable Ghassānid phylarch; hence the friendly gestures of Justin II in courting Theodore and the latter's arrival in Constantinople without Jacob, where he was royally received by Justin. And it was also he who conducted the negotiations in the final stage of the controversy and actually excommunicated Conon.

Not well documented is his role in fighting the dangerous Phantasiast heresy, which had plagued Monophysitism since the days of Severus himself, and which received considerable impetus and support and indeed a new lease on life when the *autokrator* himself, Justinian, adopted it and tried to impose it on the church but died before he could exercise the last act of his Caesaropapism. As these Phantasiasts penetrated the provinces and were in evidence in the Arab area,²³⁹ and even went so far as to consecrate a bishop for Bostra itself, his see (according to one *Vita*), Theodore must have dealt with this issue too, but the extant sources are again silent.

²³⁹ On this see above, Appendix, 775-77.

The Monophysite church had to deal with members of its own communion who defected to the Chalcedonian position, and this concerned Theodore intimately, since even members of the Ghassānid royal house were lured to that doctrinal position, and in the 570s even Theodore's own successor, John, the bishop of the federate Arabs, was won over, however temporarily, to the Chalcedonian fold.²⁴⁰ The sources are not so silent on this, and there is an echo of Theodore's treatment of this affair.²⁴¹

It is not entirely clear whether Theodore's zeal for his doctrinal confession also led him to attempt to convert Arab *foederati* who were non-Monophysites, such as the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids. These, at least the Salīhids, were certainly Chalcedonians. If the case of the monastery of Dayr Dāwūd is an indication, chances are that Theodore did make efforts to convert federate Chalcedonians. That monastery, built for the Salīhid king Dāwūd in the fifth century, appears in the sixth century as a Monophysite monastery.²⁴² The strife recorded by Cyril of Scythopolis between Arethas the Ghassānid and another phylarch in Palestine, al-Aswad, could suggest that in the 540s Theodore tried to convert the Chalcedonian phylarch and that Arethas was lending him a hand in that effort.²⁴³

C

After the final excommunication of the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon, the sources fall silent on Theodore, and an express statement in Michael the Syrian²⁴⁴ refers to his death in the fifth year of Justin II's reign, that is, 570. At almost the same time died his protector, the Ghassānid Arethas, and so 570 truly represents the end of an era in Arab-Byzantine relations not only because of the almost simultaneous death of the two who for the last thirty years had presided over the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* of the federate Arabs but also in view of the deterioration in these relations, which ended with the disastrous confrontation around 580.

That the two were united in the consciousness of the medieval Syriac writers is reflected in Pseudo-Dionysius, who referred to them in one passage:

Et à nouveau quels étaient les patriarches qui s'illustrèrent en ce temps? À Antioche était célèbre Éphraïm, fils d'Aphinus, d'Amida; d'Alexandrie, le patriarche Zoïle; de Rome, Agapet; de Constantinople, Ménas; de Jérusalem, Macaire. Des orthodoxes et persécutés, ceux-ci: Théodose,

²⁴⁰ See below, 869–75.

²⁴¹ On this see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 264.

²⁴² See *BAFIC*, 297–98.

²⁴³ See *BASIC* I. 1, 251–55.

²⁴⁴ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 300; for Honigmann's questioning of this firm date, see his *Évêques*, 164. Whether Theodore had something to do with the election of his successor, John, as bishop of the federate Arabs is not clear.

patriarche d'Alexandrie; Serge, patriarche d'Antioche; de Constantinople, le patriarche Anthime; Theosebius d'Éphèse; Thomas de Damas; Jacques d'Édesse, du monastère de Pesilta, et Théodore de la frontière de Na^ʿaman.²⁴⁵

Quant aux souverains, s'étaient illustrés ceux-ci: Chosroès, roi des Perses; Justinien, empereur des Romains; Arethas, fils de Gabala, roi des Arabes et chrétien; Abraham, roi des Himyarites et fidèle; Andoug, roi des Cousites et chrétien.²⁴⁶

Theodore was the most important Arab federate cleric of the sixth century, dwarfing those who came before and after him among the federate bishops. With his consecration as bishop of the Ghassānid limitrophe, the Arab federate church became organized and emerged with its hierarchy, monasteries, and churches. With Theodore, the Ghassānid phylarchate/kingdom received its complementary facet, and emerged as a truly Christian *Basileia*. For thirty years bishop and phylarch worked hand in hand for the spiritual welfare of its federates.

In addition to the Arab profile of his ministry, there was the non-Arab, when he collaborated with his senior partner, Jacob Baradaeus, in caring for the Monophysite church and its status within Byzantium. The pair stole the show from the Monophysite patriarchs of Antioch, Sergius and Paul, and became the ranking hierarchs. In so doing, the Ghassānid phylarchate achieved yet another degree of integration into the Byzantine system, as the federates became part and parcel of the Byzantine *ecclesia* just as their phylarchate had made them an integral part of the Byzantine *imperium*.

Thus Theodore takes his rightful place among other Arab ecclesiastics, Moses and Aspebetos of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively. Earlier in the century, another Arab from the Provincia, Elias, had occupied the see of Jerusalem and was its Dyophysite patriarch. Theodore, of the same century, was his Arab counterpart in the Monophysite church and foreshadows George, the well-known bishop of the Arabs in Islamic times.

B

The Second Phase (569–578)

I. INTRODUCTION: THE ACCESSION OF MUNDİR, 569

If Justin II's reign opened the era of the successors of Justinian in Byzantine history, the accession of Mundir in 569 ushers in the era of the successors of

²⁴⁵ Author and translator have committed inaccuracies. Theodore was bishop not of "ḥirtā de Na^ʿmān" but "ḥirtā d'Ḥārith/Arethas." For the Syriac version see *Chronicon Anonymum*, textus, ed. J. B. Chabot (Louvain, 1933), vol. II, p. 110, lines 9–10. The translation of *ḥirtā* as *frontière* is inaccurate; it should be translated the "camp." For the Roman frontier, Syriac writers often use *līmīṭōn*.

²⁴⁶ *Chronicon Anonymum*, trans. R. Hespel, CSCO 507, *Scriptores Syri* (Louvain, 1949), vol. II, pp. 82–83.

Arethas, a new one in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. The preceding *quadrennium* had witnessed harmonious Arab-Byzantine relations since Arethas was still alive and Justin II was courting the Monophysites. Now the situation dramatically changed. The old phylarch, who had been a stabilizing force in Arab-Byzantine relations, died and in his stead came a younger, more forceful successor who also had as his overlord a younger successor—and an unstable one at that. The clash of personalities at the highest level was thus inevitable, and the result was a period of hardships for Monophysitism and a collision course for Arab-Byzantine relations. In spite of short spells of harmony and reconciliation, the incredible finally happened when, in 582, Munḍir was arrested and exiled, an event that changed the course of Arab-Byzantine relations. The reign of Munḍir is thus the crucial reign for these relations, and consequently every aspect of it deserves close attention in order to understand what led to the extraordinary events of 582.

Justin again tried to reconcile the Monophysites in 571 when he issued his second edict, appropriately called the Second Henotikon. Its sincere and genuine attempt to reconcile the Monophysites attracted no less a figure than John of Ephesus himself, but it finally failed to reconcile and unite the two churches. The strongly Chalcedonian and anti-Monophysite patriarch of Constantinople, John Scholasticus, exercised great influence on Justin, who began a new persecution of the Monophysites, called the Second Persecution, in both the capital and the provinces, which continued throughout his reign.²⁴⁷ In addition to the troubles the Monophysite church had to go through at the hands of a hostile Dyophysite *imperium* and *ecclesia*, that church also experienced dissensions within its own ranks which almost rent it apart. There was first the defection of its own patriarch, Paul, to the Chalcedonian position, which left the church without its consecrated hierarch for some time. Then there was the regional strife between Monophysite Egypt and Monophysite Oriens, subsequent to Paul's visit to Alexandria in 575 and the question of the consecration of Theodore as the new Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria. Finally, there was the unholy strife that erupted for the last three years of the reign of Justin within the Monophysite camp, when it was sharply divided between the supporters of Patriarch Paul and those of Bishop Jacob—the Paulites and the Jacobites.

It was this situation that Munḍir inherited immediately as he acceded to the Ghassānid *Basileia* in 569. He was now the secular protector of the Monophysite church, a role he inherited from his father. As his successor in the *Basileia*, he was also the continuator of his ecclesiastical policies in his commitment to Monophysitism. Nothing illustrates this better than the two letters²⁴⁸ involving the Provincia Arabia in the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, the one

²⁴⁷ See Frend, *Rise*, 321–23.

²⁴⁸ On the two letters, see above, 814–24.

addressed to it and the one addressed from it. The first presents Arethas as its protector; the second is silent on Arethas, who in the meantime had died, but presents Mundīr, the new Ghassānid king, as the new *fidei defensor* of Monophysitism, a role that finally proved to be his undoing.

Even more than his father, he dominated ecclesiastical affairs in these years. During the reign of Arethas, it was Theodore, the bishop of the Ghassānid limitrophe, that shared the limelight with Jacob Baradaeus in ecclesiastical matters while Arethas watched from afar and moved quickly when he was needed. This was not the case now. Theodore had died in 570, in the first year of Mundīr's reign, and his death had left a vacuum that was not filled by anyone around him. The patriarch Paul was discredited as he caved in to Chalcedonian advances; and so did Mundīr's own bishop, John, the incumbent of the Ghassānid episcopate. As for the holy man, Jacob, he was getting very old after thirty years of strenuous struggle in behalf of Monophysitism, and it was rumored that he was also getting senile.

Such then was the ecclesiastical scene and such was the Ghassānid king on whose shoulders fell the task of protecting the persecuted Monophysite church in the last nine years of Justin's reign. The following sections will treat in detail the course of events in these final years of the reign.

II. MUNDIR: *GLORIOSUS, CHRISTOPHILOS, PATRICIUS*

The reign of Mundīr opens not with a military engagement but with an ecclesiastical conference which thus sets the tone for the reign that was to be heavily involved in ecclesiastical as well as military encounters, a twofold involvement that Mundīr inherited from his father. His name appears for the first time in Syriac sources in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia, written around 570, in which they gave their approval of the condemnation of the heresy of Tritheism.²⁴⁹ Mundīr's name explicitly appears in one of the signatures: "Sergius, priest and abbot of the monastery of ʿŪqabtā, I have signed through the hand of the priest, Mār Eustathius, my prior, who is the priest of the church of the glorious, Christ-loving and patrician, Mundīr."

This subscription, together with the others, has been analyzed in a previous section.²⁵⁰ That discussion centered on the clerics, Sergius and Eustathius, and the toponym.²⁵¹ Also discussed there was the question of whether the reference to Mundīr implies that his father, Arethas, had died by 570 and that he was now the reigning Ghassānid phylarch and king. This is the most plausible conclusion, and Nöldeke was of this view. He also concluded that

²⁴⁹ For the letter, see above, 821–23.

²⁵⁰ See the section on the subscriptions, above, 831.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

the conference of the archimandrites was held under Muṇḍir's patronage,²⁵² which is also perfectly possible. Whatever the truth may turn out to be, Muṇḍir cuts a large figure in the letter as a Christian ruler, with an exclusively Byzantine and Christian titulature, "glorious, Christ-loving, patrician," with whom a church is associated ("the Church of Muṇḍir"), and with a priest assigned to it by the name of Mār Eustathius, who, as Nöldeke observed, may be considered a court chaplain.²⁵³

In order to test these hypotheses on Muṇḍir and extract some data on his involvement in ecclesiastical affairs, it is necessary to analyze the Ghassānid profile of the subscription. This is the earliest attestation of Muṇḍir in the primary Syriac sources, and it most probably reflects the fact that he is now no longer only the crown prince but the reigning king of the Ghassānids. Although it has been argued that the silence of the signatures on Arethas is not necessarily evidence that he had died, still the chances are that he did, especially as his son is referred to as *patricius*. The term *shbiḥa* (*gloriosus/gloriosissimus*) is not decisive since it is also applied to the Ghassānid princes, but *patricius* most probably is, and its application to Muṇḍir suggests that he was by this time king and that Arethas had died. This first attestation also indicates the deep involvement of the Ghassānids in Christianity and especially Monophysitism. This, then, is his image as soon as his reign begins, not on the battlefield but in a conference of archimandrites, who wrote a letter concerning Monophysite orthodoxy. His titles, which reflect this, are not the Arabic ones that ally him to the pagan world of pre-Islamic Arabia but to the Christian Roman Empire.

This subscription thus reflects the strong Ghassānid presence in Monophysite Arabia. The vast number of signatures are all ecclesiastics; Muṇḍir is the only non-cleric mentioned in them. The Ghassānid presence is reflected powerfully, though indirectly, in the localities with which they are associated in the list, but this subscription reflects it directly by mentioning Muṇḍir, just as his father's presence is reflected in the two subscriptions that involve "the Mountain of Arethas/Hārith," Mount Arethas.

The church itself, "the Church of Muṇḍir," raises a number of questions. Did he build it, endow it, or pray in it? The chances are that he built it or endowed it, as he was to endow churches later in his life. If so, he must have done this while he was still a crown prince, which suggests that his involvement in Christianity did not begin at his accession but started earlier. Noteworthy is the fact that its location is not given, while those of other monasteries in the list are. The conclusion may be drawn that it is so close to

²⁵² Nöldeke, *GF*, 23–24.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24.

ʿŪqabtā, where the monastery lay, that it was unnecessary to repeat it, a conclusion further supported by the fact that its priest was the prior of the monastery. It does not make sense to have a second in authority if he lives far from the monastery. This reference to a church of Munḍir is welcome and may be added to others of the same kind in the literary sources, such as John of Ephesus. It may also be added to the archaeological evidence which associates him with a house in Hayyāt, with a tower in al-Burj, and with a *praetorium* outside the walls of Sergiopolis, another confirmation of the essential reliability of Ḥamza's list on the Ghassānids as great builders.

Nöldeke raised the question of the place where these archimandrites met and suggested Dārayyā on the ground that many archimandrites came from monasteries in and around it.²⁵⁴ This is possible but does not necessarily follow. One would expect the meeting to be held at a well-known Ghassānid center such as Jābiya (Gabītha), the monastery of which was represented. The reference to the "Church" of Munḍir remains striking as it is isolated in the midst of some 137 signatures of abbots of monasteries, not churches. Thus it is possible that the meeting was held in the "Church of Munḍir" and that this Ghassānid presence is reflected indirectly by the signature of its priest Eustathius who did not forget to mention his Ghassānid affiliation as the priest of Munḍir's church. Arethas, as has been suggested, was most probably dead when the letter of the abbots was written, but his son and successor was alive and very much so. This reference to him and also the implied reference to him at the end of the letter itself could suggest that Munḍir was not absent from the meeting, although he apparently did not preside over it, since it may have been uncanonical to preside over a meeting of archimandrites. Munḍir must have been in the area at the time, rather than at the frontier; with the recent death of his father, he had probably hurried back to the Golān, where Jābiya was located, to be recognized and hailed as king by his people.

In addition to this explicit reference to Munḍir in the letter of the archimandrites, there is an implicit reference to the Ghassānid dynast or dynasts—to Arethas or Munḍir or both of them—at the end of the letter where the abbots express hopes for the union of the churches and remember the efforts of "serenos et triumphatores imperatores nostros." This phrase was analyzed in a previous section,²⁵⁵ and it was concluded that both father and son are implied in it, in addition to Justin II. Thus the letter projects an image of the Ghassānid Munḍir explicitly and implicitly, the image of a ruler concerned for the welfare of his church in which he appears as a secular figure, shepherding its fortunes. His father had presided over the last conference in Constantinople that condemned the Tritheists, and apparently his son, now king, participates

²⁵⁴ Nöldeke, "Topographie," 427.

²⁵⁵ Above, 822–24.

in the Arabian conference of archimandrites that supported the condemnation of the Tritheists. The son inherits the father's role as *fidei defensor* of the Monophysite church, and, as the father strove throughout his reign in support of that church, so did his son. But while the father was able to elude the intrigues of Dyophysite ill-wishers and died full of years and honors, the son, after only one decade or so, was entrapped mostly by Dyophysite intrigues which brought about his downfall.

III. THE APOSTASY OF PATRIARCH PAUL, 571–575

Hardly had the Monophysite church disposed of the Tritheistic heresy with the final condemnation of its two proponents in 570, when it was convulsed again the following year by the apostasy to the Chalcedonian position of none other than the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, Paul. His apostasy presented the Monophysite church with an internal problem and with an external one relating to Dyophysitism and the Byzantine state in Constantinople. The Ghassānid dynast Muḍīr was heavily involved in both aspects. This section is thus devoted to the period during which Paul went over to the Chalcedonian position, recanted, fled to the court of Muḍīr, addressed a *libellus* of repentance to the Eastern Synod in 574, went to Egypt in the same year, and was finally accepted back conditionally into the Monophysite fold in 575.

The various phases of this extraordinary drama and the role of Muḍīr in it may be presented as follows.²⁵⁶

1. When Justin II issued his second edict²⁵⁷ in 571, Paul was still in Constantinople after his participation in the preceding year in the conference with the Tritheists. Like John of Ephesus, he decided to communicate with the Chalcedonians as a result of the second edict, which was favorable to Monophysite sentiment. Paul is usually portrayed as a weak and vacillating cleric, but it is just possible that he really felt that the edict satisfied all Monophysite hopes and aspirations and that accepting it would mean the union of the churches and the end of the disastrous schism. As he had been anathematized by Justin II in the 560s for his role in the election of the Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, it is also possible that he thought that accepting the edict would end his estrangement from the imperial govern-

²⁵⁶ The fundamental article on the career of Paul in the 570s is that of E. W. Brooks, who used the *Documenta Monophysitarum* for reconstructing it, thus making obsolete previous scholarship on Paul; see his "The Patriarch Paul of Antioch and the Alexandrine Schism of 575," *BZ* 30 (1930), 468–76. But Brooks' conceptions of the Ghassānids and their role in this episode were vague. Arethas to him was a *shaikh* called Al-Ḥārith (*ibid.*, 469) and Muḍīr was the successor of that *shaikh* (*ibid.*, 471). Honigmann's conception of the Ghassānids was equally vague.

²⁵⁷ For which, see Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 487, where it is called "le second Hénétique."

ment. As mentioned earlier, some of the princes of the Ghassānid dynasty were won over to the Chalcedonian position,²⁵⁸ possibly because they thought that communion with the Chalcedonians would eliminate tension between the dynasty and the central government.

2. Paul, however, recanted, possibly because his hopes that Chalcedon would be denounced were dashed to the ground. He was incarcerated for nine months and was able to escape from his prison and seek refuge with Mundir. His flight may be assigned to 572. The primary source for this episode is John of Ephesus, who unfortunately expatiated on such trivia as the condign punishment with which John Scholasticus, the Dyophysite patriarch of Constantinople (565–577), was visited as a result of his Chalcedonian “wickedness.” At the same time the ecclesiastical writer exasperatingly dismissed the escape of Paul in a few lines, saying that he finally escaped from his prison, went down and lay hidden in the region of Arabia with the privity of the house of Mundir, son of Hārith, until the time of the terrible chastisement: “Et deinde postea exiit et discessit et in regione Arabiae delatuit, consciis viris aulae Mondir filii Harith, usque ad tempus supradictae castigationis terribilis.”²⁵⁹ This brief sentence calls for close examination since it is the only passage in John of Ephesus that has survived on the role of the Ghassānid dynast in the episode.

The principal phrase that involves the Ghassānids is “b’yīda^ʿ thōn d’Bēth Mondir bar Hārith,” “with the privity of the house of Mundir, son of Hārith.” Thus Payne-Smith understood that Paul’s escape was effected with “the privity of” the Ghassānids.²⁶⁰ This is only remotely possible: the Ghassānids had their connections in Constantinople and could have contributed to Paul’s escape, but this is unlikely, especially as the language of John of Ephesus does not suggest this interpretation. Chabot did better when he translated “delatuit, consciis viris aulae Mondir,” thus connecting the privity of the Ghassānids with Paul’s taking refuge with them. The law of proximity suggests this, since the Syriac “estatar” (“lay hid or took refuge”) precedes “b’yīda^ʿ thōn d’Bēth Mondir” (“with the privity of the house of Mondir”). Furthermore, on semantic grounds, *b’yīda^ʿ thōn*, “with the privity or knowledge,” goes better with “he lay hid” than with *nfaq*, “he escaped.”²⁶¹

The term Arabia in this passage cannot refer to the Provincia Arabia.

²⁵⁸ See above, 849.

²⁵⁹ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 48, lines 1–4; textus, p. 67, lines 8–11.

²⁶⁰ See R. Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus* (Oxford, 1960), 89, where he translates the phrase as “he escaped with the privity of the household of Mondir, son of Hareth.”

²⁶¹ And the whole sentence contrasts with the preceding one where John of Ephesus says that Paul was hidden in a closet fixed in a wall for nine months in Constantinople before he escaped; then he hid without the authorities’ knowledge of where he was, unlike the Ghassānids, who knew of his being with them: “is autem intra urbem, ut dicunt, celatus erat in armario parieti infixo novem menses”; *HE*, p. 47, line 34–p. 48, line 1.

This is clear from the fact that the term *eparchia*,²⁶² used by Syriac writers to refer to the Provincia Arabia when Arabia is mentioned, is not used in this context but only the general term, the "country" or "region" (Syriac *athrā*). Thus Arabia here must mean the Arabian Peninsula, whither Mundir fled or retired when he left the service of Byzantium in 572.

The phrase on the Ghassānids in Syriac reads "b'yīda' thōn d'Bēth Mondir bar Hārith." Chabot translates "consciis viris aulae Mondir filii Harith" or "Mundir et sociis eius,"²⁶³ both inaccurate. The crucial Syriac word is *Bēth*, which here means the "royal house" of Mundir or the Ghassānids. Terms such as *socii* and *aula* are alien to the text. *Bēth* is used by Syriac writers and applied to such Arab groups in the sense of royal house.²⁶⁴ In John of Ephesus, the Ghassānid dynasty appears closely united round its king with a very strong sense of family ties; so here "Bēth Mondir" means his brothers and sons, as it is used later on,²⁶⁵ and both are attested in the sources, since Mundir did have brothers and sons.

Not so clear is the last phrase in the passage which speaks of Paul's hiding until the time of the terrible punishment that was mentioned before, "usque ad tempus supradictae castigationis terribilis." Payne Smith understood this to be a reference to the illness that befell his enemy, the Chalcedonian patriarch, John Scholasticus, and so he paraphrased the sentence freely as "until the time when the terrible retribution of Heaven fell upon the Patriarch John."²⁶⁶ There is something to be said for this interpretation. John Scholasticus had been the villain of the whole episode as far as John of Ephesus was concerned; he describes the illness to which he succumbed and uses the same word, *mardūtā*, in the two passages; and the passage on John's illness does indeed precede this one on Paul.²⁶⁷ Yet it is difficult to relate the illness to the period during which Paul stayed as a refugee and fugitive at the court of the Ghassānids. John died in August 577, while Paul left Mundir's court for Egypt in 574. This implies that John lay ill for some three years! In any case, the phrase, whatever it refers to, is not helpful for establishing the duration of Paul's stay with the Ghassānids, which is known to have taken place from 572 to 574 when he left the Ghassānid court for Egypt.²⁶⁸

3. Paul's decision to flee back to Oriens and seek refuge with the

²⁶² On the substandard *huparchia*, see above, 824 note 115.

²⁶³ As in the footnote; see *HE*, p. 48 note 1.

²⁶⁴ See the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," *Der Islam* 33 (1958), 254–55.

²⁶⁵ See, for instance, *HE*, p. 162, lines 15–16.

²⁶⁶ Payne Smith, *Ecclesiastical History*, 89.

²⁶⁷ For the passage on the illness of John Scholasticus, see *HE*, Book I, chap. 38, while this passage on Paul appears later in Book II, chap. 8. For *mardūtā* in the two passages, see *HE*, textus, p. 48, line 1 and p. 67, line 11.

²⁶⁸ See Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 471.

Ghassānid king suggests the following observations. Paul had sought and found refuge at the court of Muḍīr's father, Arethas, in the late 560s, and he correctly assumed that the son would follow his father's example in granting him asylum. Moreover, Arethas had been instrumental in his own election to the Patriarchate of Antioch in 564, and so the dynasty was solidly behind him. It should be remembered that 572 was the year in which Muḍīr fell out with the central government, after Justin II treacherously wanted to arrest him. For three years, until 575, Muḍīr was outside Byzantine territory and angry with Justin.²⁶⁹ Hence Paul must have felt he was in the same boat as Muḍīr in their being out of favor with the imperial government. As far as the image of the Ghassānid dynasty is concerned, Paul's decision to seek refuge with him indicates that even when the Ghassānids were considered outlaws by Byzantium and were living *extra limitem*, they were still perceived as the *fidei defensores* of Monophysitism, which in fact they were.

4. Muḍīr's welcoming Paul as a refugee at his court must have been inspired by a number of considerations. The Ghassānid house was an extremely well-knit and loyal group. In according Paul refuge at his court, Muḍīr was following in the footsteps of his father who had done the same in the late 560s, and was also supporting the cleric whom his father had worked hard to put on the patriarchal throne of Antioch. In addition to family loyalty, there was the veneration for the person of Paul which the Ghassānid house cherished. John of Ephesus, speaking of his stay with them in the late 560s, described the impression Paul made on the Ghassānids and the Arabs of the desert through his qualities of moderation, gravity, and learning.²⁷⁰ This, too, must have been an element in the receptive mood of the Ghassānids toward Paul.

In addition, Muḍīr at this time was no longer in the service of Byzantium. After he discovered the conspiracy that Justin II had woven around him, he moved *extra limitem* for three years. News that the patriarch of his church also was a fugitive from Justin and Chalcedonian Constantinople would only have commended Paul to Muḍīr's attention. Perhaps he felt that the advent of the patriarch of Antioch in his camp would give him moral support during this period when he himself was outlawed by Byzantium and was living under a cloud outside the limits of the *imperium*. Thus, for the second time, the house of Ḥārith/Arethas crossed the imperial will of Byzantium in relation to Monophysite clerics. First Arethas had accepted Paul after his being outlawed by Justin II and ordered his name to be restored to the diptychs of the church, and now his son Muḍīr received Paul, who had fled Chalcedonian justice in Constantinople after his recantation. This should be

²⁶⁹ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 356–64.

²⁷⁰ See John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 162, lines 8–9.

taken into account in the study of the deterioration of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations during the reign of Mundir and be added to the other causes of political friction.

Thus the years 572–574 emerge as a dismal period in the history of Monophysitism. The Ghassānid king in Oriens, its secular protector, was in disfavor at the imperial court and was outside the *imperium*; and so was the ranking hierarch of the church in Oriens, Paul, and the two were living together in one and the same camp. It is a cheerless period in the history of Monophysite Oriens and is reminiscent of the period around 520 when Justin I exiled the Monophysite bishops and with them went the Ghassānids, terminating their service to Byzantium.

5. The final stage in this episode began when Paul left the Ghassānid camp in 574 and went to Egypt. Before doing this he had written his *libellus* of repentance to the Eastern Synod and asked to be received back into communion. A year elapsed before this took place, and it was done conditionally. Jacob again is the principal figure in the acceptance, and again it is the Ghassānid king who is instrumental. Both Michael the Syrian²⁷¹ and Bar-Hebraeus confirm that Jacob accepted Paul at the request of Mundir, and in so doing they were quoting from what has not survived of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus. In Bar-Hebraeus' Latin version, the Ghassānid involvement is expressed as follows: "Tres autem post annos susceptus fuit a sene Jacobo rogatu Mundari, Gabalae filii."²⁷²

It is noteworthy that this took place in 575, the same year that Mundir himself was reconciled with Byzantium and returned to its service. It is not altogether unnatural to suppose that, during the *biennium* when he stayed with Mundir, Paul may have talked to the Ghassānid king about reconciliation with Byzantium as he himself had tried to do doctrinally in 571. In any case, the two years are further evidence of the interrelation of religion and politics during this period. The year 575 thus witnessed a return to normality after the two leading Monophysite figures in Oriens had lived in total eclipse, the one a fugitive from Chalcedonian Constantinople, the other an unemployed federate who had pitched his camp outside the *limes*, which his dynasty had protected for decades. With the reconciliation of Mundir to Byzantium and the acceptance of Paul into the church, Monophysite Oriens received back its Antiochene patriarch and its federate Ghassānid king.

IV. THE GHASSĀNID EPISCOPATE

The historians, in what is extant of their works, are silent on the fortunes of the federate episcopate after the death of Theodore in 570. That episcopate had been established for some thirty years on a new basis, and it is impossible

²⁷¹ *Chronique*, II, 318.

²⁷² *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, I, 238.

to believe that it had no incumbent in this decade during the reign of Mundir. That valuable collection, the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, comes to the fore with an incidental reference that makes it possible to establish the continuing existence of the episcopate during this time.

The precious reference comes in that long letter written by a recluse, Sergius, in defense of the Monophysite patriarch Paul against nine counts advanced by an archimandrite named John. Sergius answers these counts one by one and in the course of his defense of Paul grapples with the question of Paul's crossing over to the Chalcedonian position in the early 570s and how he recanted and repented.²⁷³ In defense of Paul, Sergius invokes the precedents of Liberius, the bishop (pope) of Rome; Hosius, the bishop of Cordova; and Gregory, the father of St. Gregory the Theologian; they had all erred doctrinally but were received back into their confessions.²⁷⁴ After the names of these three, he invokes the name of John, bishop of the Arabs,²⁷⁵ who, he says, "died in our own days," and thus he rounds off the enumeration by referring to him.

Episcopos autem aliquando in communionem cum haeresi, sive sponte sive invitos, cecidisse, et conversos prompte ab omnibus orthodoxis acceptos fuisse, docet historia beati Liberii patriarchae Romae, et Osii confessoris, episcopi Cordubae civitatis, et beati Gregorii patris sancti Gregorii theologi, et, ut plura omittam, tempore nostro Iohannis defuncti episcopi Arabum.²⁷⁶

There is no doubt that the John in question was a bishop of the federate Arabs.²⁷⁷ The Syriac term for Arabs in the text is *Ṭayāyê*,²⁷⁸ the normal design-

²⁷³ For Sergius' exchange with John, see *Documenta*, 157–206. Brooks, as noted before, was the first to use the *Documenta* effectively, after the publication of the Syriac text in CSCO, for his study on Patriarch Paul in *BZ* 30 (1930), 468–76. For his notice of the letter and his dating of it to either 580 or early 581, see *ibid.*, 468–69.

²⁷⁴ In so doing, Sergius must have had before him one of the letters of Severus, the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, in which he refers to the defection from doctrinal correctness of Liberius and Hosius; see *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus*, ed. E. W. Brooks (London, 1902–4), II, 206. Sergius now adds Gregory and John, the bishop of the Arabs.

²⁷⁵ Thus he puts John in the same category as the distinguished churchmen whom he enumerates. John is unlikely to have reached the ecclesiastical importance of the others, but the insertion of his name here could suggest that the writer thought highly of him. How important he was is impossible to tell, since nothing else is known about him other than this solitary reference in the letter.

²⁷⁶ See *Documenta*, p. 166, line 32–p. 167, line 2.

²⁷⁷ As was recognized by Honigmann (*Évêques*, 164), but qualified with *probablement*. John was unknown to Nöldeke, who had used the *Documenta* as interpreted by H. G. Kleyn and before their authoritative publication in the CSCO, and also to Aigrain ("Arabie," cols. 1214–16), who did not read Syriac and so could not use the *Documenta*, the Latin version of which had not been produced when he wrote his monumental article.

²⁷⁸ *Documenta*, textus, p. 239, line 11.

nation for non-Rhomaic Arabs, and especially the federates. That he must have been such may be confirmed by the fact that the Ghassānid federate episcopate had been well established, and its incumbent was the distinguished Theodore who had shared the limelight with Jacob Baradaeus himself, with whom he was consecrated bishop during the historic moment when Arethas undertook the revival of the Monophysite hierarchy. It is inconceivable that after thirty years of distinguished service the Ghassānid episcopate would have lapsed, especially as the death of Theodore in 570 coincided with a triumph for orthodox Severan Monophysitism over Tritheism and with the accession of the redoubtable and zealous Mundir.

It remains to examine this laconic and passing reference to John, the bishop of the Ghassānids in the 570s.

1. Sergius wrote his letter in 580 or early 581, by which time John had died. This raises the first question: the date of his consecration and the duration of his episcopate during the 570s. Sergius' letter gives no clue; it provides only the *terminus ante quem*, 580 or early 581. The chances are that he was consecrated around 570 when Theodore died. It is impossible to believe that no incumbent was appointed to fill the vacant federate Ghassānid see, and the reasons are the same that have just been adduced for the identity of John as a Ghassānid. It may then be safely assumed that John followed Theodore immediately²⁷⁹ as the Ghassānid bishop, and it is possible that Theodore had something to say concerning the election of John, who may even have been related to Theodore as his *syncellus*. Theodore was Jacob Baradaeus' close associate for thirty years; Jacob was still active when Theodore died and survived him by eight years. It is quite possible, therefore, that he consecrated or took part in the consecration of John.

2. The next question is that of John's doctrinal switch to Chalcedon. How and when did this happen? This is a matter of considerable interest and significance in the study of the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids. These were staunch Monophysites, and here is none other than their own bishop going over to the Chalcedonian position.

The most likely date for John's desertion of the Monophysite confession is the early 570s.²⁸⁰ It was in this period that Mundir's relations with the central government soured and ended in his withdrawal from the service of Byzantium for some three years. With the disappearance of the powerful phylarch, who was the mainstay of the Monophysite faith in Oriens, it was not so difficult for an ecclesiastic such as John to succumb to official Chalcedonian

²⁷⁹ H. Charles committed the blunder of thinking that Paul, the Monophysite patriarch, was the successor of Theodore; see his *Le christianisme des arabes nomades sur le limes* (Paris, 1936), 30, 67. It was noticed by Honigmann, *Evêques*, 64 note 8.

²⁸⁰ On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 346–56.

pressure and change doctrinal color, which would not have been the case if the powerful phylarch had remained on the scene of Near Eastern history supporting his bishop.

3. Such doctrinal crossing over does not seem incredible on the part of the bishop when it is remembered that the Ghassānid royal house itself contained some members who had gone over to Chalcedon. In the Syriac manuscript found at Nabk,²⁸¹ written in the days of Theodore and Jacob, there is a prayer for the Ghassānid king Abū Karib, the brother of Arethas, and also for the return of some of his erring brothers to the correct Monophysite position. Later, in the early 580s and after the arrest of Mundīr himself, the central government sent Magnus to Oriens, and he installed one of Mundīr's brothers who had become a Chalcedonian.²⁸² If this was the case with members of the royal house themselves, the *fidei defensores* of Monophysitism, it is not surprising that the bishop went in the same direction under pressure from fellow Chalcedonian ecclesiastics.

4. The circumstances under which this happened are unknown but can be guessed from some of the data that the extant sources provide. In the *HE* of John of Ephesus, there is an account of the conversion of Patriarch Paul himself to Dyophysitism. The Monophysite historian states that the Monophysite patriarch Paul lapsed into the communion of the two natures, when he was summoned to the capital in the hope that at last the union of the churches might be established.²⁸³ In the course of this narrative, John of Ephesus mentions that Paul did not go to Constantinople alone but was summoned there together with others ("cum ceteris aliis"),²⁸⁴ and that after they were received by the emperor and after many discussions with those in Constantinople, Paul and the three that were with him ("Paulus et tres alii cum eo erant")²⁸⁵ finally succumbed and lapsed into communion with the Dyophysites.

It is therefore most likely that John converted to Dyophysitism in these circumstances and on this occasion. He could easily have been one of the three, presumably bishops, who were summoned to Constantinople. The Dyophysite Patriarchate of Constantinople wanted some influential members of the Monophysite communion in Oriens to come and be converted. Naturally they thought of the patriarch and also one of the most influential bishops in his patriarchate, the incumbent of the federate Ghassānid episcopate whose predecessor had visited Constantinople for important assignments and had been invited there by Justin II himself in the late 560s. Even if he was not

²⁸¹ See above, 845–50.

²⁸² See *BASIC* I.1, 471–75.

²⁸³ *HE*, p. 150, lines 9–12.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, line 4.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, line 9.

summoned by the Dyophysites of the capital, John might easily have been picked up by Paul to accompany him, since Paul knew the status and prestige of the Ghassānid bishop very well.²⁸⁶ And it is not impossible that once in Constantinople, and in the constant company of Paul, he was influenced by him in his decision to go over to the Chalcedonian position after being fully convinced of the correctness of this decision in the interest of church unity. In so doing, he would have simply followed the lead of his patriarch.

5. The chronology of the events associated with the doctrinal defection of John can thus be assigned to the early 570s or the first half of the decade. This is supported by the fact that John of Ephesus gives the whole affair of the defection to Dyophysitism—the recantation and the acceptance of the clerics, including Paul, by the Synod of the East—the duration of some five years, two for the process of their conversion to Dyophysitism in Constantinople and three for their recantation and acceptance back into the Monophysite fold.²⁸⁷ This seems right and fits well with the withdrawal of Mundir and then his return in the mid 570s. The writer of the long letter in the *Documenta Monophysitarum* says that John was pardoned, and this must have taken place with Mundir's full knowledge and approval, since the last thing that the Ghassānid phylarch, who had just been reconciled with Byzantium, would have wanted was dissension within his ecclesiastical camp. He had always worked for the unity of the church, and he would surely have welcomed the return of John to the fold and to the Ghassānid episcopate.

6. The last question that reference to John in Sergius' letter raises is his whereabouts in the mid and late 570s. The sources are completely silent on him, whereas they should have something to say in view of (a) the course that events took and that called for his participation in them—the Paulite-Jacobite struggle; (b) the important and active part the Ghassānid phylarch took in reconciling the two parties—one would expect his own bishop, John, to be similarly or even more involved; and (c) the fact that he was one of the ranking bishops of the Monophysite hierarchy, the successor of Theodore, the old associate of Jacob for thirty years. Yet there is not a word about him.

The clue to what must have happened is provided by Sergius, the writer of the long letter in the *Documenta*. As noted earlier, Sergius wrote his letter in 580 or early 581 after John had died. So John could have died in the mid-570s shortly after his reception back into the Monophysite fold by the Synod of the East. Thus his episcopate may have been of short duration, and there are parallels in church history for a brief incumbency of bishops and patri-

²⁸⁶ And it is not unlikely that Paul may have participated in the consecration of John, in the laying on of hands, together with Jacob Baradaeus. If so, he would have been well known to him.

²⁸⁷ See *HE*, p. 150, lines 6, 17–18.

archs. Sergius, who was elected Monophysite patriarch of Antioch in the late 550s, lived for only three years.²⁸⁸ And Peter IV, the Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria in the 570s, did not occupy the see of St. Mark for more than two years.²⁸⁹ Perhaps the stress that John went through during his defection and reconversion to Monophysitism shortened his days.

7. The question must inevitably arise as to who his immediate successor was. It is impossible to believe that the Ghassānid episcopate was left vacant, especially as the second half of this decade was a glorious period for the Ghassānid phylarchate/kingship. Mundīr would not have left his Ghassānid federates without a bishop. Yet again the sources seem to be silent on any Ghassānid bishop, at least one who is explicitly referred to as such. There is, however, a candidate in the sources who could be identified with the Ghassānid bishop in this period, and this returns the discussion to the identity of that mysterious ecclesiastic, Antiochus, who has been discussed previously.²⁹⁰

In a crucial passage in the *Documenta*,²⁹¹ he appears at a conference held at the court of Mundīr in Arabia where bishops and abbots had assembled to reconcile the Paulites and Jacobites in the mid 570s. These ecclesiastics presented a petition to the Ghassānid Mundīr as the instrument through which it might be presented to Antiochus, who is referred to by the reverential title "Mar." In a previous section, a number of suggestions were made for identifying this person. It could also, with much plausibility, be suggested that he was the Ghassānid bishop in the second half of this decade, the successor of John. He seems to answer to the description, since he appears at the court of Mundīr; he is influential, and one of his predecessors in the see, Theodore, had functioned on similar occasions in the same capacity as a leading figure in Monophysite disputes.

The sources are silent on Antiochus after this reference to him in connection with the reconciliation of the Paulites and Jacobites, and they are also silent on other Ghassānid ecclesiastics throughout the reign of Mundīr and even after. This does not mean that these ceased to exist or to function. The Greek sources are notoriously uninformative on Ghassānid ecclesiastical history, and the Syriac sources have not survived in such a way as to be informative on what to them was not central to their interest. The presumption is that the Ghassānid episcopate persisted, but its fortunes remain unknown.

The conversion of the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch and the Monophysite bishops of the Ghassānids to Dyophysitism was a *coup* on the part of

²⁸⁸ Honigmann, *Évêques*, 193.

²⁸⁹ For the determination of the short duration of Peter IV's patriarchate (575–577), see Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches*, 212 and note 1.

²⁹⁰ On Antiochus see above, 843–45.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

the Byzantine Chalcedonian establishment. As has already been observed, it was done at a propitious moment, when the powerful Ghassānid phylarch had withdrawn from the service of Byzantium after he had discovered the plot that had been concocted to do away with him. The Monophysite hierarchs must have felt isolated and without the protective Ghassānid shield that Mundir had provided them with.

Awareness of this concurrence—Mundir's absence from the scene and the invitation to the Monophysite clerics to convert—returns the student of this period to an important question, namely, the plot against Mundir, which is engulfed in mystery. After winning a crushing victory over the enemies of Byzantium, he expected a warm welcome from Justin II; yet the emperor's reply was a plot to do him in. Some answers have been given to the circumstances that may have led to the plot, but now in the context of the ecclesiastical history of the period, especially the attempt to convert the Monophysite ecclesiastics, it is possible to suggest a new approach. In a previous chapter,²⁹² it was suggested that the plot was more the work of Dyophysite clerics than non-clerics. This view could now be corroborated in view of the attempts to convert the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch and the bishop of the federate Ghassānids, which followed the Byzantine plot and the Ghassānid withdrawal from the service. These attempts shed new light on the Dyophysite plot which may be reinterpreted in this new context.

After the failure of the second edict issued by Justin II in 571, the stumbling block toward uniting and receiving the Monophysites into the Chalcedonian fold was probably identified as the powerful Ghassānid phylarchate, its protective shield. Hence it was decided to do away with Mundir as a step toward effecting the desired union. Thus the stage was set for luring the ecclesiastics, who thus were more amenable to the approaches of the Chalcedonian church, to convert them without their having to be afraid of the opposition of the secular *fidei defensor* of their church in Oriens. The chief architect of the plot could have been Gregory, the Dyophysite patriarch of Antioch and the inveterate enemy of Monophysitism, who is especially remembered by ecclesiastical historians for his attempts to win over Monophysite Oriens and the patriarchate to strict Chalcedonian orthodoxy. His incumbency of the see of Antioch began in 570 and lasted until 593; so he might have wanted to celebrate the inception of his incumbency by engineering this *coup* against Monophysitism, doing away with its secular head, the Ghassānid Mundir. His possible role in the plot has been explored previously in this volume, and the new context of this section on ecclesiastical history can only confirm that role.²⁹³

²⁹² See *BASIC* I.1, 445–46, 458–59.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

V. THE SCHISM WITHIN THE PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH:
PAULITES VERSUS JACOBITES, 575–578

Hardly had the problem of Paul's apostasy been solved in 575 by his acceptance on the part of the Eastern Synod and Jacob, when a new storm raged that divided the recently united Patriarchate of Antioch into Paulites and Jacobites. It lasted from 575 to the death of Jacob in 578 and continued beyond that date. The Ghassānid king Muḏīr played an important role in the efforts to reconcile the two parties, but in order to understand and evaluate his role, it is necessary to treat briefly the background of this schism.²⁹⁴

Paul had alienated the Alexandrians in the late 560s when he visited his native country and became involved in the struggle for the incumbency of the vacant see of St. Mark. He alienated them again in the mid-570s for the same reason, in the course of the year or so when he arrived in Alexandria in 575 and departed a year later, possibly in January 576.²⁹⁵ The Alexandrian see had been vacant now for some years after the death of Theodosius in 566, and the phases of the complicated situation that obtained in the course of the year 575/76 may, in the interest of clarity, be outlined as follows.

a. Longinus, the bishop of Nubia, together with two bishops from Oriens, John of Chalcis and George of ʿUrtāya, consecrated Theodore, a Syrian archimandrite, as the new patriarch of Alexandria in 575. Although Paul himself did not participate in the laying on of hands, apparently the consecration was in his interests, since the new patriarch would receive him, as in fact he did.

b. The news of Theodore's consecration was received with fury by the Alexandrians, who were used to choosing their own patriarch. But now a patriarch was thrust upon them, consecrated by the bishop of Nubia and two bishops from Oriens and, what is more, was a creature of Paul, whom they had rejected.

c. After some disagreements, the Alexandrians elected Peter, an old deacon and an associate of the late Theodosius, who was thus consecrated patriarch of Alexandria as Peter IV in 575.

d. One of his first acts as patriarch was to depose Paul; furthermore, he issued an encyclical attacking Paul and also Jacob Baradaeus, who had consecrated him.

e. Jacob retaliated by calling Peter a "new Gaian," and then proceeded to Alexandria, which he reached possibly in the autumn of 575, when and where the unexpected happened.

f. Although he made the journey to Alexandria to support Paul and avert

²⁹⁴ The best account of this background may be found in Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 468–79, and Honigmann, *Évêques*, 200–203.

²⁹⁵ As correctly calculated by Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 476 note 5.

a schism, he ended up by surrendering to the Alexandrians. He not only recognized Peter IV as the new patriarch of Alexandria but also agreed to depose Paul on condition that he not be anathematized. An exchange of synodical letters between Peter IV and Jacob confirmed the agreement between the two.

Such was the strange transaction in Egypt which was to divide the Monophysites of Oriens into Jacobites and Paulites. It ranged the Egyptian Monophysites with the Jacobites against the Paulites and their patriarch, Paul, the incumbent of the see of Antioch, and rocked the patriarchate and Oriens for some years to come. It was this grave problem that Mundir, the Ghassānid king, inherited, with the return of Paul to Oriens in January 576 since it was to him that Paul turned for help.

The involvement of Mundir and his role in the process of conciliation is documented in some primary sources, principally John of Ephesus and the *Documenta Monophysitarum*. But it is sporadically and intermittently presented; hence the necessity of organizing it and presenting its three stages in a consecutive account. In view of the paucity of the extant sources, and the misunderstanding of the true and extensive role of the Ghassānids in the history of the Monophysite church and this schism,²⁹⁶ it is well to let the primary sources speak through some revealing quotations.

1

The first phase of the negotiations for reconciling the two parties took place probably in 576 after Paul's return from Egypt in January. He naturally invokes the aid of Mundir and requests a thorough investigation of the issue. So the scene shifts to the court of Mundir, but even the king's prestige was not sufficient to render his intercession fruitful. The two main sources for this phase of the schism are John of Ephesus and the *Documenta Monophysitarum*.

John of Ephesus

In a passage in chapter 21 of Book IV of his *Ecclesiastical History*, John of Ephesus relates in general terms that Mundir, the believing and zealous Arab king, worked hard to make peace between the two; that the Jacobites would not consent in spite of Paul's fair request that the matter be investigated; that the Ghassānid Arabs revered both Jacob, whom they had known since the days of Arethas, and subsequently Paul; and that as a result the Ghassānids themselves were divided into Paulites and Jacobites.

²⁹⁶ As noted earlier, Brooks' conception of the Ghassānids was extremely vague. For him Mundir, who was *patricius*, was a *shaikh*, and he refers to him as such without further ado, as he had referred to his father, Arethas (*ibid.*, 469, 475).

Caput XXI, de zelo et studio Mondir filii Harith regis Ṭayâyê. Mondir vero etiam filius Harith rex Ṭayâyê, vir fidelis et zelosus et studiosus, diu ambas partes adhortari et obsecrare perstitit, ut, ira ac pugna omissis, inter se convenirent, et colloquerentur et inter se pacem facerent, nec Iacobitae ei obtemperaverunt, cum ipse Paulus ipsum Mondir et multos obsecraret ut de eis quae a Satana inter eos commota erant quaestio et cognitio fieret.

Et, quoniam diu et a diebus Harith patris eius senem Iacobum ut virum magnum habuerant, itemque tandem et Paulum etiam, et cum ad tantam procacitatem et immanitatem et discordiam inter se pervenissent, nec Iacobitarum pars leniri aduissent, facta est exinde in omnibus etiam exercitiis Ṭayâyê discordia, cum multi eorum offensi essent, et pars Paulum et pars Iacobum secuti essent.²⁹⁷

The passage in John of Ephesus is not detailed and lacks the specificity of the other sources to be analyzed below, but it is valuable for the picture it draws of the Ghassânid phylarch and his camp and how they were affected by the schism.

a. Mundir appears as a true Christian, "fidelis et zelosus et studiosus," who urged both parties to come to terms and be reconciled. His anxiety that this should happen is understandable since his reign had witnessed the end of the Tritheistic controversy and the problem of Paul's apostasy; hence he naturally did not want to see his church disunited again. There was also a more pressing reason for his desire for reconciliation. He himself had been at odds with the central government for the last three years during which he had left the service of Byzantium and had withdrawn from his headquarters in the Provincia Arabia into the Arabian Peninsula. He had just made his peace with Byzantium, and so it must have grieved him to see his own church rent by internal schism, as this augured ill for its relations with hostile Dyophysite Byzantium.

b. There was another reason behind Mundir's ardent desire to have the two parties reconciled: his own armies became divided in their sympathies between the two parties, with one group taking the side of the Jacobites, another that of the Paulites. This was not conducive to good morale in the federate army, the seasoned army that had been invincible in Mundir's campaign against the Persians and the Lakhmids. The passage also throws light on the seriousness with which the Ghassânid army took its Monophysitism and its Christianity, and it suggests that it took a keen interest in ecclesiastical controversy,²⁹⁸ a point already made by Arethas when he addressed the two proponents of Tritheism, Eugenius and Conon.

²⁹⁷ *HE*, p. 155, lines 27–36 – p. 156, lines 1–6.

²⁹⁸ See above, 818.

c. From the passage, Paul appears more reasonable than Jacob since he requested a thorough investigation of the charges made against him; hence the support Mundir gave Paul throughout, in addition to the latter's being the patriarch, the symbol of unity for the Monophysite church in Oriens. Jacob, on the other hand, appears adamant, but his prestige emerges clearly from the veneration the Ghassānid army held him in since the days of Arethas, and this is made even clearer with the realization that it was not he but Paul who was the ranking hierarch in the Patriarchate of Antioch.

The Documenta Monophysitarum

One of the most valuable parts of the *Documenta* consists of the long letter written by the recluse Sergius,²⁹⁹ in which he defends Patriarch Paul against a certain archimandrite by the name of John, written shortly after these events, in 580 or 581. The writer cites original documents and gives some specific valuable details, not to be found in John of Ephesus, on the Ghassānid profile of this schism and the scene in Mundir's province and court during these negotiations for reconciliation.

In one of his many arguments for Paul, Sergius recounts that Paul went to Arabia together with other archimandrites and bishops, enduring the rigors of winter there as well as bad food; their presentation of a petition that the problems should be thoroughly investigated; that Mundir was the intermediary who presented the petition to a certain Antiochus but without avail.

Qui noverit, dicat. Numquid latet quempiam cursus eius et omnium sociorum eius in Arabiam? Protractum tempus ibi egerunt in omni vexatione ob rigorem hiemis et pravos cibos, rogantes viros cuiuscumque ordinis et conditionis ut causa examini subiciatur, sit iudicium legale et omnia peragantur sicut postulat pulcra dispositio ecclesiastica. Quis autem ita solus peregrinus est in Ierusalem ut haec ignoraret? Et ut haec omittam, quid faciemus de altera, quae subsequuta est, profectioe venerabilium episcoporum qui cum eis erant, et virorum senectute curatorum, archimandritarum plurimorum coenobiorum, qui rursus in regionem Arabiae cucurrerunt in omni alacritate, medio hieme, obliti, ut ita dicam, debilitatem corporis, supplicantes cum lacrimis et adiurantes omnibus adiurationibus, in scriptis et viva voce, ut fiat negotii discussio et examen, sicut declarat protestatio ab eis data Mar Antiocho per gloriosum patricium Mundarum. Et eo tempore seipsos urserunt progredi adeo ut, prae vehementia frigoris et nivium abundantium, quidam eorum in itinere mortui sint et qui aegre evaserunt longo tempore variis morbis laboraverint.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ See *Documenta*, pp. 157–206.

³⁰⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 184, lines 28–36 – p. 185, lines 1–10.

This passage gives a rare and vivid glimpse of the scene at the court or camp of Mundīr, where the clerics assembled in order to resolve the schism. The first question which arises concerns Arabia, to which Paul came as a refugee. Was it the Byzantine Provincia or the Arabian Peninsula? Before this question is answered, some reference to the difficulties encountered by the clerics should be made, and it is relevant to answering the question of which Arabia is meant. The passage speaks of inclement climatic conditions in two phrases: "ob rigorem hiemis et pravos cibos" and "vehementia frigoris et nivium abundantium." A savage winter and abundant snow greeted the clerics in addition to bad food ("pravos cibos").

One would naturally think first of the harsh winter conditions of the Arabian Peninsula where Mundīr had his advance military posts facing the Lakhmids and the Persians. But a realization that this was 576 could argue in favor of the Provincia. The year before, Mundīr reconciled himself with Byzantium, returned to the service, and won a crushing victory over the Lakhmids.³⁰¹ But this happened before the three-year truce,³⁰² which was concluded between Byzantium and Persia later in 575. Consequently, Mundīr would have spent the winter of the following year back at his headquarters in the Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Secunda, in the Golān at Jābiya or some other camp-town rather than at his camp in the limitrophe. The letter that the archimandrites of the Provincia Arabia wrote in 570 concerning Tritheism has given a large number of toponyms, ecclesiastical centers³⁰³ at which Mundīr could have met Paul and the clerics. As to adverse climatic conditions and poor nourishment, it is just possible that the winter of 576 was a particularly harsh one and that abundant snow, unusual in that part of the world, could have interrupted communications and transportation and consequently the supply of food.³⁰⁴ So the chances are that the Arabia referred to in the letter of Sergius was the Provincia, which probably in ecclesiastical parlance included also the region of Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis and Palaestina Secunda, as it did in the letter of the archimandrites of 570.

The second question is the identity of the mysterious Mār Antiochus mentioned in the passage. The Paulites had prepared, according to the canon law of the Monophysite church, the *pulcra dispositio ecclesiastica*, a petition (δύαμαρτυρία) so that a thorough investigation of the matter be conducted. This is where Mundīr comes in, described as *gloriosus* and *patricius*. The Ghassānid

³⁰¹ See *BASIC* I.1, 378–82.

³⁰² See *ibid.*, 383–84.

³⁰³ See above, 824–38.

³⁰⁴ Reference to bad food brings to mind the meal that Arethas prepared for Ephraim, patriarch of Antioch, when he offered him camel meat in order to make his point. But one would hardly expect that Mundīr would have served the clerics, who were his guests, such food. On the encounter between Ephraim and Arethas, see above, 752–53.

king had inherited all the prestige of his father, Arethas, as *fidei defensor* and had already in his own right acted on two occasions on matters pertaining to the Monophysite church, one of which concerned Paul himself and the acceptance of his repentance, when he asked Jacob to receive him back into the Monophysite communion. So Paul and the clerics did well to come to Mundir for resolving this new difficulty. They handed him the petition and he acted as intermediary between the Paulites and Jacobites. He, in turn, handed the petition to Mār Antiochus, who appears in the passage without any qualification or description that can give a clue to who he was. But this lack of any clue may be a clue in itself: when the recluse Sergius wrote his letter in 580 or 581, Mār Antiochus may have been a well-known figure in the Monophysite world of Oriens who needed no further qualification or description.

The identity of this Mār Antiochus has exercised the ingenuity of many scholars, and it has been discussed in a previous section.³⁰⁵ No certainty can be attained without new data. *Inter alia*, it has been suggested above that he was the Ghassānid bishop of the limitrophe, consecrated after the death of Bishop John in the mid 570s.³⁰⁶ The case for Antiochus' being the Ghassānid bishop in the second half of the eighth decade may be restated with more cogency in this context.

a. In recent times, the Ghassānid bishop had been a most influential cleric in the Monophysite communion. For thirty years, Theodore ranked second only to Jacob Baradaeus in the counsels of Monophysitism and thus established the status of the Ghassānid episcopate on a solid basis. The Ghassānid phylarchate became even more important with the reign of Mundir, and it is natural to suppose that the status of the episcopate rose commensurately, or at least did not diminish in status.

b. Mundir had just returned to the service of Byzantium from a self-imposed exile, anxious to reassemble the various constituents of his *Basileia*, established by his father on the twin pillars of the phylarchate and the episcopate. He celebrated his return with a smashing victory over the Lakhmids, and it is consonant with the tone of his reign and his restoration that he should have been anxious for the restoration of the episcopate as well. It is therefore practically certain that the Ghassānid phylarchate had its episcopate too in this period.

c. At this juncture, the Ghassānid bishop would have been a most influential person. Patriarch Paul had been discredited twice in the course of the last ten years, and Jacob was getting very old; in fact he died two or three years later in 578, and some had insinuated that he was by now senile or

³⁰⁵ For this see above, 843–45.

³⁰⁶ On John, the bishop of the Ghassānids, see above, 870–74.

deteriorating. Thus the Ghassānid bishop must have been, by process of elimination, one of the most influential clerics of the Monophysite church.

d. A cleric of this description would certainly have been involved in one of the most delicate problems that faced the Monophysite church of this period, namely, the reconciliation of the two warring parties into which it was divided, the Paulites and Jacobites. So when a certain Mār Antiochus appears at the court of Mundir, whither the two parties had come for the resolution of the dispute at a peace conference, it is not unnatural to assume that he was the Ghassānid bishop of the period, receiving the *instrumentum unionis* from his phylarch, who in turn had received it from the assembled clerics. In so doing, he would have presented the *instrumentum unionis*, backed by the prestige of the Ghassānid king whom Jacob trusted and respected. A Ghassānid bishop had been closely associated with Jacob since Theodore was consecrated with him around 540, and for thirty years the two worked closely together. Thus a Ghassānid bishop in the 570s could very well have been the right choice for delivering the petition to Jacob with the earnest wishes and hopes for reconciliation of his distinguished secular chief, *gloriosus* and *patricius* Mundir. That he does not receive further mention may be due to the nature of the sources and their survival, besides the fact that he must have been overshadowed by the commanding personality of Mundir as the protector of the Monophysite church (witness his astounding performance in Constantinople in 580).

If the identification turns out to be correct, then another Ghassānid bishop may be added to the short list that has survived in the sources, namely, Theodore and John. From the manner of his reference to Antiochus, the writer of the letter, Sergius, clearly implies that Mār Antiochus was still alive and well around 580 when he wrote. It is noteworthy that the Ghassānid bishops assumed either biblical or Greek names on their consecration, in contrast to the phylarchs who kept their Arabic names. This was only natural and is a reflection of the utter integration of the Ghassānid clerics into the Christian fold.

2

The second phase of the negotiations toward a resolution of the differences that obtained between the two parties opened shortly after the conclusion of the previous fruitless attempt at the court of Mundir. This time it was on the initiative of Longinus, the bishop of Nubia, who, after news of the bitter strife between the Paulites and Jacobites reached him in Egypt, hurried in 576, together with Theodore, to Oriens in order to confer with the Paulites on how to effect a reconciliation with the Jacobites. While Theodore remained in Tyre, Longinus proceeded to the headquarters of Mundir to whom he gave a full account of the dispute, which made Mundir even more anxious to medi-

ate and resolve the dispute, but the Jacobites remained adamant and refused the mediation. John of Ephesus is the primary source for this phase as he was for the first.

Ob causam igitur eiusdem rixae et turbationis quae ubique obtinebat, et praesertim in tota Syria, Longinus et socii eius et Theodorus qui ab eis patriarcha factus erat, ad regionem Aegypti profecti, inde etiam ad regiones Syriae orientales et ad Paulitas descenderunt, ut una cum Iacobitis causam agerent, et, si possent, contentionem et malum quod a malo inter eos commotum erat dissolverent. Tum Theodorus in urbe Tyro otiosus manebat, Longinus autem usque ad castra tribus Harith filii Gabala ad Mondir filium Harith descendit; et, cum sermones cum eo contulisset eumque totam veritatem accurate docuisset, rex Mondir eos congregare et ad pacem adducere rursus studuit; cui Iacobitae omnino non obtemperaverunt.³⁰⁷

The role of Longinus, who took the initiative and who, as will be seen further on, was almost lynched by the monks for taking up the cause of Paul, needs to be explained. This was the evangelist of Nubia who, in the late 560s and early 570s, had completed the conversion of Nobatia, begun by the other Monophysite evangelist, Julian, in the 540s. Although he was the missionary of Nubia, Longinus had been associated with Paul since the latter's consecration as patriarch and was his *apocrisiarius* in Constantinople. Like Paul, he was an Alexandrian but belonged to the Monophysite Patriarchate of Antioch. The late patriarch, Theodosius, who had recommended Paul for the patriarchate, also sent Longinus to convert Nobatia. But he remembered Paul and remained faithful to him. In 575 he left Nubia for Alexandria where he tried to have Theodore elected, and in so doing worked in the interest of Paul, since Theodore would accept the controversial patriarchate of the latter. Now that his efforts to have Theodore accepted by the Egyptians failed, he hurried to Oriens in order to help Paul in that region.³⁰⁸

Theodore, who came along with him, was none other than the rejected patriarch whom Longinus had recommended and consecrated. He was a Syrian archimandrite, and so Oriens was his native region. John of Ephesus does not say why he did not join Longinus immediately at the conference with Mundir, but Michael the Syrian provides some additional information: "Theodorus demeurait à Tyr près des partisans de Paulus, voulant discuter avec ceux de Jacques."³⁰⁹ Paul had much support in Syria, while Jacob's supporters were mainly in Mesopotamia. Apparently the two clerics thought it best to divide

³⁰⁷ *HE*, p. 156, lines 8–21.

³⁰⁸ For Longinus and Theodore, see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 284–99, 233–34.

³⁰⁹ *Chronique*, II, 325.

their labors. Longinus, the much more important and influential cleric, naturally went to confer with Mundir.³¹⁰

As in the account of the first phase, the meeting place of Longinus and Mundir is not explicitly stated. The Latin text of John says that Longinus went down to the "castra tribus Harith filii Gabala." So he went to the camp of the Ghassānids. The Latin version, which has *tribus* as the translation of Syriac *Bēth*, is inaccurate since the Syriac term signifies "House" and the Latin version should read "castra domus Harith, filii Gabala," "the camp of the House of Harith, son of Gabala."³¹¹ As the Syriac original does speak of a *hertā* ("camp") of the Ghassānids, the question arises as to whether *hertā* here simply means "camp" or is a proper noun such as Mount Hārith. It is striking that Hārith/Arethas had been dead for five years, and so the involvement of his name in the reference to the camp can mean either that his prestige persisted posthumously or that the term here is a toponym that carried his name, such as reflected in Jabal al-Hārith, the Mountain of Hārith.³¹² The year is 576, and this was the first year of the three-year peace with Persia; so Mundir is more likely to have been at his court in Jābiya rather than his camp in the limitrophe; but he may have been at the latter when Longinus came to see him hurriedly concerning Paul and Jacob.

John of Ephesus' account of the conference that Longinus held with Mundir raises two points. The first is the language employed by the two. The natural presumption, from a close look at the passage, is that they spoke the same language without an interpreter. This language could not have been the native language of Longinus—which presumably was Coptic since he was an Alexandrian—nor Mundir's native Arabic, but Greek, the common language.³¹³ The second point that the account raises is the implication of the phrase "eumque totam veritatem accurate docuisset." Longinus was partial to Paul, and apparently John of Ephesus too; so Longinus informed Mundir of the whole truth about the dispute, from the Paulite point of view, and this was noted approvingly by John of Ephesus.

That the bishop of Nubia should have come to Mundir for the solution of this problem is another indication of the importance of Mundir in the Monophysite church of the sixth century. His importance is now not only regional in Oriens but much wider, recognized in the Nile Valley in Africa. And subsequent events only confirm this fact. It does not diminish his importance

³¹⁰ Longinus may have known Mundir as a crown prince in the 560s when he was still in Oriens, associated with Paul as the newly consecrated patriarch of Antioch, and he certainly must have known his father, Arethas, and the dynasty's role in the election of Paul.

³¹¹ For the Syriac text, see *HE*, textus, p. 209, line 2. On the meaning of *Bēth* in such a context, see the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 254, where for *baytā* read *bēth*.

³¹² On Mount Hārith, see above, 825–26.

³¹³ As an Alexandrian, Longinus may have been a Greek, not a Copt.

that his efforts to bring about a reconciliation were not successful at this phase.

3

The third phase in the negotiations moves away from the court or camp of Mundir to the monastery of Mār Ḥanīna. The course of events that led to the transference of the scene may be described as follows. After spending the last part of 576 in Oriens, Longinus wrote in November of that year to John, the archimandrite of the monastery of Mār Ḥanīna,³¹⁴ which was the principal venue of the partisans of Jacob. Longinus expressed his willingness to appear before an assembly of its inmates and bishops in order to answer the charges leveled against him by the Jacobites, a course apparently suggested by the archimandrite. John wrote to Longinus that he should come to the monastery for a conference composed solely of himself, Longinus, and Jacob. When Longinus appeared, not alone but "with others," he found himself facing a crowd of angry monks, but no Jacob. After a stormy meeting in which the monks grew violent as they handed him a written document which was an indictment and asked him to answer it, he refused to read it. So it was read for him against his will, while he kept his fingers in his ears. Finally, he succeeded in escaping, not without difficulty.

The principal source for this is again John of Ephesus,³¹⁵ whose account of this conference at the monastery of Mār Ḥanīna may be analyzed as follows.³¹⁶

1. The hostility of the monks toward Longinus, who appears as a man of peace trying to compose differences, is an indication of the intensity of the schism between the two camps. The opposition of the monks and the Jacobites in general derives from the fact that Longinus had long been associated with Paul and so he was considered not impartial but one trying to gloss over Paul's defects. Then there was the problem of his consecration of Theodore as patriarch of Alexandria without consultation with the Syrian bishops, and so he was associated with another discredited and rejected patriarch, Theodore. These must have been some of the elements in the indictment against Longinus read by the monks, but which are not listed by John of Ephesus who only refers to the indictment.³¹⁷

2. Longinus could not have gone to the monastery of Ḥanīna without the knowledge and approval of Mundir, who was the principal secular figure in the reconciliation process. After negotiations at his court or camp failed,

³¹⁴ He was also the bishop of Sura in Euphratesia; see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 191–92.

³¹⁵ See *HE*, p. 156, line 20–p. 157, line 19; see also Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 475–76; Honigmann, *Évêques*, 203, 228.

³¹⁶ Unfortunately his account of the sequel to this conference is not extant, except for two fragments.

³¹⁷ For the "charta quae contra eum scripta erat," see *HE*, p. 157, line 5.

Mundir must have felt that a journey by Longinus to see Jacob himself at the monastery might be beneficial. That Longinus had the approval and blessing of Mundir is clear from a statement made by Longinus which has been preserved in *oratio recta* in the text of John. When the monks became violent and started reading the indictment against Longinus' wishes, he shouted and protested for being so roughly handled: "Vae! regem habeo. Cur dolo occidor?" ("Woe! I have a king. Why am I to be treacherously murdered?").³¹⁸

The *crux* resides in the first sentence, *regem habeo*, which has exercised the ingenuity of Payne Smith, Chabot, and Brooks. In Syriac it may be transliterated *malkā ʾih lī*. In his translation of the *Ecclesiastical History*, Payne Smith rendered the exclamatory sentence, "Woe, woe, what have I done?" In his footnote he translated the Syriac sentence "I have a king" and added: "but this is nonsense," emending the sentence into *manā ʾih lī*.³¹⁹ Chabot in his French version of Michael the Syrian translated the sentence as "ma résolution est prise," and in his edition of the text of John of Ephesus in the CSCO he clearly understood the crucial word not as *malkā* (king) but as *melkā* (counsel), as noted by Brooks in his Latin version of the text.³²⁰ Brooks in his Latin version left the sentence as it is, *malkā ʾih lī*, and translated literally: *regem habeo*. In the footnote, however, he thought the text was corrupt.³²¹

Surely the text is not corrupt, and the sentence makes excellent sense. None of the commentators seems to have remembered that before his long account of the conference at the monastery of Mār Ḥanīna, John of Ephesus had discussed at length Mundir, the king of the Ghassānids, in connection with the Paulite-Jacobite strife and explained his role in the peace process between the two parties. The opening part of this section has explained how Mundir must have known of Longinus' prospective conference with archimandrite John at the monastery of Mār Ḥanīna and how he most probably encouraged him to do so. So what Longinus was doing when he was faced with an angry, murderous crowd of monks was to tell this hostile crowd that he had the support of the redoubtable Ghassānid king, the *fidei defensor* of Monophysitism in Oriens. So the two parts of the exclamatory sentence complement each other, and were meant as a shield for Longinus against the monks who threatened his life. Brooks conceived of Mundir as *shaikh*, as he had done of his father, Arethas. Thus, he could not associate the term *malkā* (king) with the Ghassānid and so erroneously thought the text was corrupt.³²²

3. The monastery of Mār Ḥanīna, the meeting place, deserves some rec-

³¹⁸ *HE*, p. 167, line 13; for the Syriac version, see p. 210, lines 2-3.

³¹⁹ See Payne Smith, *Ecclesiastical History*, 287 and note r.

³²⁰ See Michael the Syrian, *Cbronique*, II, p. 325; John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 210, line 2.

³²¹ See *HE*, p. 157, line 13 and note 2.

³²² See Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 469, 475.

ognition. This was a monastery that took its name from the thaumaturge of that name who died in 499/500. It lay not far from the Euphrates, between Barbalissos and Callinicum.³²³ The location of the monastery in the north of Oriens near the Euphrates raises the question of the *ḥertā* of the house of Ḥārith/Arethas where Longinus met Mundir during the second phase of these negotiations. It was argued that he may have met him either at his court in the Provincia Arabia or Palaestina Secunda, possibly at Jābiya, since a peace then obtained between Persia and Byzantium, or he may have met him at his camp in the limitrophe. The proximity of the monastery of Mār Ḥanāna to the limitrophe and the Persian-Lakhmid border could suggest possibly, but not necessarily, that Longinus met Mundir at his camp in the limitrophe not far from the monastery.

The sequel to the conference at the monastery of Mār Ḥanāna was described by John of Ephesus, but that part of his *HE* is not extant. In view of the threat to his life at the monastery of Mār Ḥanāna and his invocation of the name of the king (Mundir), Longinus most likely returned to the protective court or camp of Mundir, where he spent a year. On his return to Alexandria in 577, he wrote a letter to Paul before returning to his missionary work in Nubia.³²⁴

As for Paul, his end may best be told in the words of the scholar who disentangled the complexities and intricacies of these events by laying under contribution the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, then not yet translated into Latin.³²⁵ This is how Paul spent the last four years of his life: "Paul after Longinus' departure gave up the struggle and retired to Constantinople, where for four years he lived in a hiding-place known only to a few friends and here in 581 he died and was buried by night in a nunnery under a false name without funeral rites."³²⁶

The Ghassānid Involvement in the Paulite-Jacobite Controversy

The involvement of the federate Ghassānids in this controversy had been recorded by John of Ephesus not only in the sporadic references to Mundir scattered in his *Ecclesiastical History* but also in chapter 36 of Book IV, a chapter entirely devoted to it. It is a valuable account recording the various phases of the controversy and the corresponding Ghassānid reaction to them.

1

The account of the first phase yields the following data on the federate Arabs: they were devoted to Jacob; later they became also devoted to Paul

³²³ See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 192-93.

³²⁴ Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 476.

³²⁵ Hence Aigrain could not use them in his monumental article "Arabie" but had to depend on Kleyn's unsatisfactory publication.

³²⁶ Brooks, "Patriarch Paul," 476; for a few more details, see Honigmann, *Évêques*, 204.

after he took refuge with them, hiding among them from the authorities; they were then impressed by his moderation, gravity, and learning; the devotion of the federate Arab Ghassānids to the two clerics increased after the death of Ḥārith, when the two clerics met together while visiting the Ghassānids, at which time they received each other in a friendly fashion; and so the federate Ghassānids were equally devoted to the two, Paul and Jacob.

Caput XXXVI, de Mondir filio Ḥārith rege Ṭayâyê, et de omnibus cattervis eius, qui propter eandem occasionem quae inter Paulum et Iacobum erat vexabantur et adflictabantur. Cum igitur omnes cattervae Ṭayâyê ab initio beato Iacobo devincti essent, necnon et vivente etiam sene Ḥārith Paulus illuc ivisset et apud eos celatus esset, et per eum etiam propter moderationem et gravitatem et eius doctrinam aedificati sunt. Necnon magis post mortem Ḥārith, cum partes ambae apud eos convenissent, tum alter alterum amice receperunt, tum ibi in ipsis castris Ṭayâyê ambobus Paulo et Iacobo omnes devincti erant.³²⁷

The striking feature of this passage, and also of the remaining part of the chapter, is the emphasis not so much on Mundir about whom John of Ephesus had said much elsewhere, but about the Ghassānid troops themselves, who were passionately engaged in the controversy. The Syriac for these troops is the term *yablē*, which generally means "tribes," but here in this military federate context it means the Ghassānid federate troops³²⁸ and is rightly translated by Brooks as *cattervae*, the Latin term used for non-Roman auxiliary troops in the Roman army, as opposed to the legions and regular troops.³²⁹

The passage indicates the involvement of the Ghassānid armies in the theological and ecclesiastical disputes, evidenced by the fact that John of Ephesus thought it appropriate to devote an entire chapter to them. Noteworthy is the emphatic *omnes*, "all" of them, used twice in the passage to reflect the extent and pervasiveness of this involvement.

The passage records the devotion that the Ghassānid armies nursed toward the old man Jacob, who became a sort of holy man of Monophysite Oriens and the most prestigious cleric, in spite of the fact that he was not the patriarch but only the bishop of Edessa, technically. This devotion must derive both from genuine admiration for Jacob and also from that of Ḥārith toward him, reflected most eloquently in Ḥārith's/Arethas' letter³³⁰ addressed to him in 563.

³²⁷ See John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 162, lines 3–13.

³²⁸ Explicitly referred to as armies when Arethas refers to them during the Tritheistic controversy, ca. 570, for which, see above, 818. Closer is an earlier passage in John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 156, line 4, which explicitly refers to the armies of the Ghassānids, divided by the Paulite-Jacobite schism; above, 878.

³²⁹ On *cattervae* in this sense, applied to Arab federate troops, see *BAFOC*, 171.

³³⁰ On this letter, see above, 782–88.

The devotion to Paul derives from reasons similar to those that informed the Ghassānid devotion toward Jacob. But there were additional ones. Paul had come as a refugee from Egypt in the late 560s, and the old king, Arethas, gave him the privilege of Arabic *jiwār*, the privilege of being a protected neighbor. So the Ghassānid troops supported him on that score, in addition to the fact that they were impressed by his virtues—moderation, gravity, and learning.

Later in the mid 570s, both of them, Paul and Jacob, stayed with the Ghassānids when both were on friendly terms with each other, and the troops became attached to both of them. The ecclesiastical historian speaks of the *castra*, the *ḥirtā* of the Ghassānids, as the venue, and this may mean his camp-town, such as Jābiya in the Golān, or a camp in the limitrophe, probably the former. This reference to the meeting of two distinguished clerics at the court or camp of the Ghassānids sheds a bright light on the non-military aspects of the history of the Ghassānids. They emerge from these references as a military group that was deeply involved in the cultural currents of the day. The Ghassānid military camp becomes the venue for the patriarch of Antioch and the holy man of the Monophysite Orient, and thus it ceases to be merely a camp for a group of rude soldiers but a center where matters of ecclesiastical concern are discussed. This picture of the Ghassānid camp-town is important for grasping the truth about the Ghassānids in the history of Arabic and Christian culture in Oriens in the sixth century.

2

The second phase of the controversy and response begins when relations between Paul and Jacob soured in the mid 570s after the Alexandrians rejected Paul and agitated against him while he was in Egypt, and were also able to win to their side Jacob, who agreed to depose Paul from the patriarchate. John of Ephesus refers to this phase when he says that all the Arabs were disturbed by the schism, especially Mundir their king, together with his brothers and sons and others who besought the old man, Jacob, to be reconciled and be united with Paul. Jacob refused either to receive Paul or to be joined in union with him, giving as a pretext the Alexandrian rejection and deposition of Paul, saying "If they will not receive him, neither will I." As a result, the Arabs were disturbed and grieved.

Tandem vero, cum Satanas perturbationem inter eos iecisset, Ṭayâyê omnes vexabantur; et praesertim ipse rex eorum Mondir cum fratribus et filiis suis et ceteris, qui ipsum senem Iacobum obsecrabant ut alter ad alterum accederent et unirentur; qui eis non obtemperabat ut eum reciperet eique uniretur, cum Alexandrinos obtenderet: "Nisi illi eum recipiant, nec ego eum recipiam." Itaque omnes Ṭayâyê indignabantur et vexabantur.³³¹

³³¹ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 162, lines 14–20.

The passage emphasizes, as had the preceding one, the fact that *all* the Arab federates were perturbed by the schism between the two Monophysite prelates. This is the record of the *first* reaction of the Ghassānid federates to the schism and reflects their concern.

In addition to the troops, there was also the king, Muṇḍir, who was especially concerned. There is also reference to his brothers and sons who were also concerned about this schism. This reference may be added to others in John of Ephesus on the Ghassānid royal house, which appears united around its chief in ecclesiastical as well as military matters, and it must be the earliest implied reference to Nu'mān, Muṇḍir's son, who comes to prominence in the 580s, after the arrest and exile of Muṇḍir in 582. The text speaks of "others" too, who were concerned, together with the Ghassānid royal house; most probably they were phylarchs from other tribal groups within the federate army.

Jacob's inflexibility and adamant refusal to be reconciled sound strange, coming as it does from one who had himself consecrated Paul as patriarch in the 560s, who had accepted him after he apostasized to Dyophysitism in the early 570s, and with whom he exchanged the most cordial letters. Jacob was either getting senile or had come to the conclusion that Paul was truly a bad penny.

3

The third phase opened when even the Ghassānid and other federates became themselves divided, like the rest of the Monophysite community in Oriens. Some of them became partisans of Paul and others of Jacob. John of Ephesus gives some details on how this happened. He says that the Arabs took communion at the hands of Paul when he stayed with them; that they also took it at the hands of Jacob who, however, ordered them not to take it from Paul. This divided the Ghassānid federate Arabs into Paulites and Jacobites, while others among them accepted both. This schism annoyed, perturbed, and grieved the federate Arabs, especially Muṇḍir, who tried in vain to reconcile the two. This deplorable state of affairs did not come to an end with the death of Jacob while on his way to Alexandria,³³² but continued even after his demise.

Et, quodcumque Paulus ad eos ibat, eum recipiebant, et ab eo eucharistiam accipiebant; et, quando Iacobus etiam, similiter; donec Iacobus eos eucharistiam ab eo accipere vetuit. Itaque omnes in indignatione et adflictione et perturbatione usque ad mortem senis Iacobi per-

³³² This took place in 578, apparently at the monastery of Cassian near the Egyptian border; see John of Ephesus, *HE*, Book IV, chap. 58.

stiterunt. Post mortem eius autem maior pars eorum eum secuti sunt, et pars Paulitas, et pars etiam ambos accipere perstiterunt, cum omnes pariter ob hanc discordiam et contentionem alienam quae inter eos facta erat maererent et adfligerentur, et praesertim ipse Mondir rex eorum, qui ambas partes ut inter se conciliarentur semper obsecrabat, nec invidia et odium et inimicitia quae a Satana effecta erat, et eorum qui secundum voluntatem eius consiliarii erant ambas partes rursus placari et conciliari usque ad mortem sivit. Itaque, cum senex Iacobus Alexandriam eadem controversia iter direxisset, Deus qui omnia scit, cum in adiutorium eius prius spectasset, de eo in via exitum decrevit ut etiam supra saepe notum fecimus.³³³

John of Ephesus' account of this third phase of Ghassānid involvement in the Paulite-Jacobite schism contains data that are important to cultural as well as military matters in the history of the Ghassānids.

Mundir was a pious Christian and a zealous Monophysite, as his father had been before him. Hence his effort at reconciling the two parties, examined in other passages in John of Ephesus, is understandable within this context of a devoted Monophysite working for the unity of his church. But this passage on the effect of the schism on the Ghassānid troops adds a new dimension to Mundir's interest in the reconciliation. The Ghassānid army was possessed of a high morale, part of which was religious zeal. Dissension within his army, especially on ecclesiastical grounds, was corrosive of military unity and combat readiness, especially important to a commander such as Mundir who was known for his innovative techniques in conducting a lightning war against his adversaries. Hence the additional reason for his desire to heal Monophysite wounds opened by this schism.

The passage gives a rare glimpse of Christian life at the Ghassānid camp-town. None other than the patriarch of Antioch resided there for some time, celebrated the liturgy in the camp church, and administered the Eucharist, which the troops took from his hand. Jacob, the holy man of the Monophysite Orient, did the same at the Ghassānid camp, and the soldiers took communion at his hands. Thus the *ḥīra*, the camp-town of the Ghassānids, with the visit and stay of the two ranking hierarchs in Oriens, ceases to be merely a military camp for a federate frontier force. It becomes the home of a Monophysite army that took its Christian service and worship seriously.

Even more important is the involvement of the Ghassānid troops in the ecclesiastical intricacies of the schism that divided them into Paulites and Jacobites. The schism and the controversy center around many of the activities of Paul before and during his incumbency of the Patriarchate of Antioch, in

³³³ See *HE*, p. 162, line 21–p. 163, line 2.

addition to the canonicity of his consecration. The passage in John of Ephesus gives the strong impression that the troops were passionately interested in the controversy, and this must have involved legal matters of canon law. The question arises as to whether these troops, Arab troops who spoke Arabic, and probably knew little or no Greek or Syriac, discussed such matters in Arabic. The *Documenta Monophysitarum* contain many letters and exchanges on Paul and his controversial career including an apologia. Paul stayed for some time among the Ghassānids, and it is not unnatural to assume that he would have circulated some defense of himself for the benefit of his hosts and the troops that supported him. If so, it is not unlikely that it may have been translated into Arabic, the language of these troops; this would have enabled them to engage in the dispute with the enthusiasm and zeal that is apparent from the passage in John of Ephesus.

A few years before, in 569, their king Arethas spoke of how the Ghassānid armies accepted the theological position presented by the orthodox Monophysite church against the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon.³³⁴ The presumption is that the Arab federate troops could understand and use a simple theological vocabulary for taking part in the controversy and for accepting the orthodox Monophysite position. Now this passage in John of Ephesus, which brings the Paulite-Jacobite schism to the Ghassānid camp and to the Ghassānid troops, suggests that these had a working knowledge of a simple and limited Arabic vocabulary pertaining to Monophysite canon law as well.³³⁵

VI. APPENDIX

The Episcopate of the Golān

The *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian provides data that enable the student of the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids to conclude, as has been already suggested in this volume, that the Ghassānid episcopate did not disappear after the death of John in the 570s or of Antiochus who, it has been argued, could have been John's successor.

In two documents of the Islamic period, pertaining to the seventh and the eighth

³³⁴ See above, 818.

³³⁵ A passage from Gregory of Nyssa is most relevant in this connection. The church father speaks of the popularity of theological discussions in Constantinople toward the end of the 4th century. The discussions were conducted not only in councils, cathedrals, and churches among theologians but also among ordinary people in the city's streets and markets. In his *Oratio de Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti*, he says: "Everything is full of those who are speaking of unintelligible things—streets, markets, squares, crossroads. I ask how many oboli I have to pay; in answer they are philosophizing on the born or unborn; I wish to know the price of bread; one answers: 'The Father is greater than the Son'; I inquire whether my bath is ready; one says, 'The Son has been made out of nothing'"; quoted by A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, Wisc., 1952), 79–80.

Taste for theological discussion was widespread in this proto-Byzantine period during which christological controversies continued to rage beyond the 4th century. If the bath attendants and shopkeepers of Constantinople discussed such matters passionately, the Ghassānid troops, who were zealous soldiers of the Cross, did likewise, as intimated by the sources.

centuries respectively, there is reference to the bishop of the Golān. In the encyclical letter of John, the metropolitan of the Orient, mention is made of "Jean de Djaulan"¹ as having signed the document, together with other Monophysite clerics, for the peace of the church brought about by the metropolitan in 684. In another document that speaks of the consecration of Monophysite bishops by Patriarch Cyriacus (consecrated in 793), there is reference to "Ḥabīb, évêque de la région de Djaulan, du monastère de Sarmīn."²

The "Djaulan" in these documents is the Gaulanitis/Golān, the base of the Ghassānids in Oriens in pre-Islamic times where their capital, Jābiya, was located. That a bishopric in Islamic times carried the name Golān can easily suggest that it was a continuation of a bishopric that existed in pre-Islamic times without interruption. Jābiya continued to flourish after the Muslim Conquest, and in fact it was the capital of Mu'āwiya as the governor of al-Shām (Oriens) for some two decades until he was proclaimed the first Umayyad caliph and moved to a new capital, Damascus, in 661. So it was still a flourishing town then, and it is only natural to suppose that as the capital of the Ghassānid Golān, Jābiya had also been the see of its bishop in recent pre-Islamic times, some twenty years earlier, and before the battle of the Yarmūk in 636 put an end to Ghassānid political and military presence in Oriens. This leads to the conclusion that the Ghassānid episcopate did not cease to exist after the Muslim Conquest of Oriens and that the region retained its Christian character, or some of it, after that conquest, a fact also consonant with the Christian-Muslim symbiosis, characteristic of the Umayyad period in Bilād al-Shām.

The emergence in the Syriac source of a Monophysite bishopric in 684 by the name of the Golān, going back to the recent pre-Islamic period, could throw light on the episcopate of Theodore, the Ghassānid bishop whose career has been treated at length in this volume. In "Theodore, the Arab Bishop of the Limitrophe,"³ it was suggested that his see, in which he normally resided, was Jābiya, the capital of the Ghassānids, of whom he was bishop. This suggestion now receives some further confirmation from the designation of the Golān as a bishopric in the later Syriac source.

After the disappearance of the temporal power of the Ghassānids in Oriens in 636 at the battle of Yarmūk, their ecclesiastical presence evidently persisted in the most Ghassānid of all territories, the Golān, their heartland. The episcopate presumably ministered to those who did not withdraw to Anatolia after the end of Byzantine rule in Oriens and who chose to stay there and remained Christian, becoming Scripturalists (*Dimmis*) in the new Islamic order. Thus the Ghassānid episcopate survived the extinction of the phylarchate.

¹ *Chronique*, II, 461; for the Syriac, see p. 440, col. B, line 9.

² *Ibid.*, III, p. 452, no. 51; for the Syriac see p. 753, col. B, no. 51. "Golān" is recognizable in the unintelligible Syriac word *ar-golana*. See also Chabot's footnote, p. 452 note 5, where the Arabic version read "bilād Gōlān."

Ḥabīb is an Arabic name, and so the bishop was Arab. Jean/John is the Christian biblical name, which the first bishop of 684 could easily have assumed on his consecration. It thus remains an open question whether he was also Arab. The presumption is that he was, continuing the tradition of the Arab bishops of the Ghassānids, as Theodore himself had been in pre-Islamic times.

³ Above, 850-60.

XIII

The Reign of Tiberius (578–582)

I. INTRODUCTION

The accession of Tiberius in 578 augured well for Arab-Byzantine relations. His co-rulership with Justin for the preceding four years had witnessed the reconciliation of Mundir and his return to the service of Byzantium in 575. This set the stage for even better relations when Tiberius became sole ruler with the death of Justin II in 578. The well-intentioned emperor made a very gallant effort at renewing imperial efforts to reconcile the Monophysites, which contrasts with that of his predecessor after the failure of his second Henotikon and the unleashing of the second persecution against the Monophysites. He apparently had begun this policy of reconciliation even before the inception of his reign as sole ruler in October 578. In the preceding year he had asked three of his ambassadors to Persia to mediate a reconciliation between the Paulites and Jacobites in Oriens, but to no avail, and was to continue his efforts in that direction in the most vigorous way, as will become clear in the course of this chapter.

The zeal of his federate Ghassānid king, Mundir, for bringing about this reconciliation matched his own. Hence the harmonious relations that obtained between the two; and it was during the first three years of the reign that the career of Mundir, politically and ecclesiastically, reached its climax. In the winter of 580, and after an outstanding military record on the Persian front, the Ghassānid king was invited by Tiberius to visit Constantinople, and was there given a magnificent reception, described in detail by John of Ephesus.¹ During his stay in the capital he transacted political and ecclesiastical business with the *autokrator*, and it is the ecclesiastical part that is the concern of this chapter. On March 2 of the same year, he convened a conference of the various warring Monophysite parties and achieved the impossible when his quest for an accommodation among the three Monophysite parties was crowned with signal success.² Not only was he hailed and acclaimed in the capital, but also

¹ For this and his coronation with a higher-grade crown, see *BASIC* I.1, 398–406.

² In so doing, he was repeating, but on a much larger scale, what his father, Arethas, had achieved in Constantinople a decade earlier when he presided over the church council that excommunicated the two Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon; see above, 805–24.

in the provinces. His return journey to Oriens was a triumph; in Antioch he was given a reception similar to that in Constantinople. Shortly after, he won the smashing victory over his enemies, the Lakhmids, which, according to John of Ephesus, won him universal fame and admiration. So evidently 580 was his *annus mirabilis* on three fronts—political, ecclesiastical, and military.³

Then, all of a sudden, the fortunes of the Ghassānid king took a sharp turn for the worse. He was lured to a church dedication ceremony in Oriens, was arrested by one of his trusted friends, and was taken to Constantinople, where he was put under house arrest. He was then exiled to Sicily where he languished for some twenty years. As a result, Arab-Byzantine relations experienced a setback that changed their course and influenced that of the extraordinary events of the seventh century.

Mundir was accused of high treason, and the charge has haunted the imagination of historians till the present day. Only one modern historian of the reign of Tiberius did justice to Mundir's place in the history of Byzantium—Ernst Stein. He painted a glowing picture of the Ghassānid king, not undeserved in view of the positive appreciation of the contemporary source and the objectivity and perspicacity of this modern historian.⁴ But his account of the ecclesiastical part of his achievement remains necessarily brief, and his well-known monograph is not essentially a contribution to ecclesiastical history. Historians since then have not left Mundir unnoticed, but the treatment is perfunctory and fails to do justice to the role he played in the fortunes of the Monophysite church; and there are inaccuracies.⁵ In view of the sporadic, though fairly detailed, reference to him in the primary sources,⁶ it is necessary to give a full treatment to this last phase of the Ghassānid king's contribution to ecclesiastical history. If his conference of Constantinople had not been subsequently torpedoed, Mundir's place would have been even more important

³ See *HE*, Book IV, pp. 163–66.

⁴ For Stein on Mundir, see *BASIC* I.1, 448–51.

⁵ A few of the more recent works on ecclesiastical history may be singled out as illustrations: J. S. Trimingham, in a monograph on Arab Christianity, seems completely unaware of the conference of Constantinople. He discussed only Mundir's crown and dismissed it in a few lines; see Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London, 1979), 185. Frend is more aware of the role of Mundir, but his discussion is brief and has inaccuracies: (a) he ascribes to Mundir's father, Arethas, the *praetorium extra muros* at Ruṣāfa, whereas it belongs to his son; (b) he conceives of the Ghassānids as pastoralists, since he speaks of their tents and tribes and pasturages; see Frend, *Rise*, 326, 327, and 329. E. H. Hardy associates the conference in Constantinople, not with Mundir, but with his son, Nu'mān; see *The Coptic Encyclopaedia*, s.v. Damian, vol. III, p. 688. Only an old work has done Mundir some justice and has drawn some attention to his importance, but reference to Mundir is intermittent since it is not a work on the Ghassānids, but on the patriarchs of Alexandria: see the chapter on Damian in J. Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1923), 258.

⁶ The best source remains John of Ephesus; Michael the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus have little to say. The former is slightly better than the latter and will be drawn upon when useful.

than Stein thought. In the interests of clarity, the treatment of this *triennium*, from 578 to 581, which witnessed these dynamic events, may be divided into four sections: (1) the *biennium* that preceded the conference of Constantinople in 580; (2) the conference itself in March of that year; (3) the sequel to the conference—the triumphal return of Mundir to Oriens; (4) and finally, the anticlimax to the great successes scored, from the fall of Mundir after the summer of 580 until the end of 581.

II. THE BIENNIUM OF 578–580

In order to understand exactly what Mundir achieved in March 580, how he was able to accomplish what he did, and also the ardent desire he displayed at the conference for ecclesiastical unity, noted by his historian, it is necessary to discuss briefly the background of the conference of Constantinople in 580, namely, the *biennium* that preceded it. It is a complex and intricate background related to three groups: (a) the Monophysite camp divided into three parties, with the Alexandrians and the two warring ones in Oriens, the Jacobites and Paulites; (b) the Dyophysite camp of both the imperial central government and the ecclesiastical establishment, composed of the three patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria; and (c) the Ghassānid camp, itself divided between loyalties to the Paulites and Jacobites.

The Monophysite Camp

The *triennium* that followed the death of Jacob Baradaeus in A.D. 578 might have been a period of peace for the Monophysite church. With the disappearance from the ecclesiastical scene of the "old man Jacob," the withdrawal of the ranking hierarch, Paul himself, to live in obscurity elsewhere than in the patriarchate, and the death of Peter IV of Alexandria who had deposed Paul, all seemed set for a return to normality and the quieting of factional hostility within the Monophysite communion. But it turned out to be otherwise, and the period was a stormy one partly due to the emergence of a powerful ecclesiastical personality on the scene, namely, the newly consecrated Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, Damian, in 578, who gave a new lease on life to the fierce passions that had rent the Monophysite church asunder. Consequently, in addition to the Jacobites and Paulites in Oriens, there now appeared a third party involved in the inter-Monophysite strife, namely, that of the Alexandrians, and so Mundir had to deal with the three in Constantinople.

1. The relentless Jacobite opposition to Paul⁷ continued even after he left the Patriarchate of Antioch for Constantinople in 577, some four years before he died, in 581. This opposition found expression in two ways. (a) They sent

⁷ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 336; also Honigmann, *Évêques*, 203–4.

to Constantinople two *syncelli* of Jacob, namely, Sergius and Julian, who, with their followers, continued the agitation against Paul in the capital, even after Jacob's death. (b) Even more expressive of their opposition to Paul was their election of a new patriarch for Antioch in 581. Paul had already suffered one humiliation when he was deposed by Peter IV of Alexandria in 575, and now, even while alive, he had to suffer the further humiliation of being superseded by another patriarch. The new Monophysite patriarch of Antioch was Peter of Callinicum in whose candidacy for the patriarchate Jacob himself had expressed interest before his death, but Peter would not accept. Even now he accepted with great hesitation, and he continued to have scruples of conscience until he heard of the death of Paul in 581.

2. The third party in the inter-Monophysite war was the Alexandrian. Its motives and the considerations that governed its conduct was more complex than the Jacobite, and they increased the difficulties that Mundir encountered in Constantinople in March 580. There was first the legacy of the past—a legacy of opposition to, and rejection of, Paul, their countryman.⁸ In the late 560s, they had rejected him and questioned the canonicity of his selection as patriarch; in the mid-570s, after he interfered again in Egyptian ecclesiastical politics through Bishop Longinus, they deposed him and convinced Jacob Baradaeus to do likewise.⁹ Throughout the patriarchate of Peter IV over Alexandria (575–577), they continued their opposition. Monophysite Alexandria in the last *triennium* inherited this legacy of ill-will toward Paul.

The intensity of this inveterate hatred of Paul on the part of his countrymen might have subsided with the death of Peter IV in 577 and the withdrawal of Paul from the scene altogether, but for the appearance of a new strong man on the patriarchal throne of Alexandria, Damian. As the new incumbent, he continued the Alexandrian war first against Paul and later against the new patriarch of Antioch, Peter of Callinicum, thus initiating a rift between the two Monophysite sister churches of Antioch and Alexandria that lasted until 616. It is important to examine briefly his motives and the course of action he chose to take in these crucial years, because they were not unrelated to the downfall of Mundir.¹⁰

⁸ What exactly the charges leveled against Paul by his countrymen were is not recorded in the sources. It is possible that these charges were real and serious and not made up by the Alexandrians; the fact that he, the Copt, chose to leave his country and retire in his youth to a convent in Syria might suggest that he wanted a change of scene from where he may have misbehaved. So this could give some support to the validity of the charges of the Alexandrians against him.

⁹ Jacob's acceptance of the Alexandrian charges against Paul is surprising in view of his long record of support of Paul whom he had consecrated. It is just possible that the Alexandrians convinced him during his visit of the charges they had made against Paul in the 560s.

¹⁰ Judgments on Damian vary; while John of Ephesus and Michael the Syrian are hard on

The new patriarch was a dominant, even domineering, personality in the new Monophysite camp, especially after the death of the ranking Monophysite, the old man Jacob. He was energetic and fearless, a respectable theologian, and all these qualities found arenas for their display during this period and after it. It should be remembered that Damian was a Syrian by birth and was politically connected in Oriens; his brother was the governor of Edessa. This could easily explain the extraordinary action he took, described in detail by John of Ephesus, namely, his journey into Oriens, entering Antioch itself where he tried to consecrate a new patriarch for the city, even during the lifetime of the incumbent Paul.¹¹ It is possible to see in this action an attempt to assert his preeminence as the leading Monophysite prelate of the day and possibly as a form of retaliation against Paul, who traveled from Oriens to Alexandria in the mid-570s in order to interfere in its ecclesiastical affairs, which led to the consecration of Theodore as patriarch of Alexandria by Longinus. Personality traits and the legacy of the past apart, it is possible to detect in Damian's behavior a trace of a revival of the Alexandrian claim of the see of St. Mark to guide and direct the fortunes and destinies of all the Monophysite churches of the East.¹²

The Dyophysite Camp

The Dyophysite camp was composed of the imperial government represented by Tiberius and the patriarchs of the three sees in the East: Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria.¹³

1. The three patriarchs continued their relentless opposition to the Monophysites in what the latter called the "Second Persecution," begun by Justin II (and continued through the co-rulership of Tiberius from September 574 to October 578). Eutychius, in Constantinople, who, on the death of John Scholasticus in 577, was recalled and consecrated patriarch, continued his predecessor's anti-Monophysite policy, which elicited, however, from Tiberius a spirited reply.¹⁴ The patriarch of Antioch was none other than Gregory, the *bête noire* in Monophysite sources. He emerged as a vigorous persecutor of the Monophysites and played an important role in bringing about the eventual downfall of Mundir.¹⁵ The patriarch of Alexandria, John the

him, others are not so hard and some are admirers of the Alexandrian patriarch. For the latter group, see the notice of him in Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 490–91; Hardy, "Damian"; and C. D. G. Müller, "Damian, Papst und Patriarch von Alexandrien," *OC* 70 (1986), 118–42.

¹¹ See *HE*, Book IV, chap. 41, pp. 166–68.

¹² Further on Damian's motives, see below, 912–16.

¹³ They were Eutychius, Gregory, and John respectively.

¹⁴ For this see John of Ephesus, *HE*, Book III, chap. 21, pp. 109–10; and below, 899, 917.

¹⁵ The most recent and satisfying coverage of Gregory's career and personality may be found in Pauline Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus, the Church Historian* (Louvain, 1981); see the

"Synodite," began his patriarchate in 568. Before his death in 579, he had conducted a campaign of repression against the Monophysites of the city to the extent of arresting many of their clerics and sending them to Constantinople, which they reached in May 579. On their refusal to communicate with the Chalcedonians, they were incarcerated in various monasteries in Constantinople by Patriarch Eutychius.¹⁶

2. This *triennium* coincided with the beginning of the reign of Tiberius as sole ruler after a co-rulership with Justin and a regency that lasted from September 574 to October 578. The new *autokrator* was well-disposed and continued the policy of Justin II in trying to reconcile the Monophysites. He apparently started this policy even before the inception of his reign as sole ruler in October 578, as noted earlier, when he asked three of his ambassadors to Persia to mediate a reconciliation between the Paulites and Jacobites in Oriens, but failed.¹⁷

Even more significant of his desire to solve the Monophysite problem that had plagued the reign, and the preceding ones, was his reply to two of his patriarchs in Constantinople, who wanted him to share their antipathies and repressive actions against the Monophysites. When John Scholasticus approached him on the subject, his reproachful reply was to the effect that the patriarch was asking him to behave as if he were a Diocletian, a persecutor of the Christians; also, he had enough trouble warring with the barbarians and did not want a war with his own people.¹⁸ When John's successor, Eutychius, approached him again on the same subject, he gave him a similar answer: that he was warring with the barbarians and did not wish the extra burden of persecuting the Monophysites, adding that he was innocent and free of guilt in the matter of persecution.¹⁹

His replies to the two patriarchs are significant. They reveal a ruler fully aware of where the danger for the empire lay and where his energies should be spent. The requests of the two patriarchs could only have alienated him from the ecclesiastical solution of the Monophysite problem and made him suspicious of patriarchal intentions. Hence his decision to resort to a secular solution worked out by himself, and this is the perfect explanation for the extraordinary course of action he took in Constantinople in the winter of 580 when he excluded the entire Chalcedonian establishment in Constantinople from participating in his attempts to solve the Monophysite problem.²⁰

Such must have been the thinking behind his invocation of Mundir's help for a solution. The three-year peace with the Persians had come to an end in 578, and the emperor had to worry about the course of the war with the

index, s.v. Gregory.

¹⁶ See John of Ephesus, *HE*, Book IV, chap. 37, p. 163.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 35, pp. 161–62.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Book III, chap. 12, pp. 101–2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 109.

²⁰ See below, 900–908.

secular enemy in which the Monophysite king, Mundir, was taking part, together with Maurice,²¹ the *magister militum per Orientem*. Hence his courageous decision, in spite of patriarchal opposition to the Monophysites, to summon Mundir to Constantinople in the winter of 580. He clearly understood that the key for solving the Monophysite problem was none other than Mundir, whose support for the Persian war he needed and whose prestige among the Monophysites in Oriens and in Egypt was established, partly on the record of his father, Arethas, and partly on his own record in the 570s. Hence his initiative in inviting Mundir to the fateful conference of Constantinople in the winter of 580, during which important political and military, as well as ecclesiastical, problems were discussed and solved.

The Ghassānid Camp

The Paulite-Jacobite schism has also affected the Ghassānid federate army. The stay of Paul among the Ghassānids twice, especially in the 570s, and the conference held at the court of Mundir in order to resolve the confessional differences, divided the Ghassānid army, or even armies, into two camps, Paulites and Jacobites.²²

One of the secrets behind the victories of the Ghassānids over their enemies, the Lakhmids, was the absolute monolithic structure of the Ghassānid army united by tribal and familial loyalty, as well as by religious affiliation—Christian and Monophysite. This was in sharp contrast with the Lakhmid army, composed of pagans, Christians, and sometimes Jews. This was now threatened by theological dissension and division in the Ghassānid camp into Paulites and Jacobites, which did not help the Ghassānid war effort, and affected its morale, especially at a time when the Persian front became active in 578 with the expiration of the three-year peace.

This, then, was the military and ecclesiastical scene that Mundir had before him in this *biennium*—sad division in his phylarchate and also in the patriarchate. Both the Monophysite *imperium* and the *ecclesia* were divided. Hence the ardent desire of the Ghassānid king to see the Monophysite camp united and his efforts in that direction in 580 at the top in Constantinople.

III. THE CONFERENCE OF CONSTANTINOPLE: 2 MARCH 580

Perhaps the foregoing paragraphs have sufficiently described the situation in the camps of the three parties: the Monophysites, the Dyophysites, and the Ghassānids. This will now serve as a background for explaining the reasons behind Tiberius' extension of an invitation for Mundir to come to Constantinople and for Mundir to accept it. The valuable chapter in the *Ecclesiastical*

²¹ Mundir had campaigned with Maurice against Singara and in Mesopotamia, for which, see *BASIC* I.1, 409–16.

²² See above, 887–92.

History of John of Ephesus will now be drawn upon and quoted *in extenso* in an effort to let the contemporary sources speak through the voice of the foremost Syriac historian of the sixth century, John of Ephesus. His account falls into three parts: (a) a description of the success Mundir achieved in the winter of 580 in Constantinople; (b) his return to Oriens, his activity in Antioch, and the reception he was accorded in the spring of 580; and (c) the sequel to his success at Constantinople and Antioch, and the eventual failure of the accords of Constantinople, which partly led to the downfall of Mundir in the summer of 581. This section will deal with the first part, Mundir in Constantinople.

Mundir arrived in the capital in February 580 and was then received by Emperor Tiberius in the most magnificent manner, as discussed in a previous chapter in this volume.²³ Presumably it was only after he was through with political and military transactions with the emperor that he attended to the business of reconciling the warring Monophysite parties in Constantinople by preparing them for the conference to be held on 2 March in the capital.

A

John of Ephesus devoted chapter 39 of Book IV to the efforts of Mundir in this direction, and indeed the title of the chapter speaks of the ascent of Mundir to Constantinople and his zealous labors in composing the differences between the Jacobites and Paulites: "CAPUT XXXIX, quomodo Mondir filius Harith rex Tayāye ad urbem regiam ascenderit, et de eis quae zelo propter discidium quod inter Iacobum et Paulum fuit gesta sunt."²⁴

After a long passage in which John of Ephesus describes in strong terms the very sad state of affairs that obtained between the Jacobites and Paulites, even after the death of "the old man Jacob," he discusses the role of Mundir, who had come to Constantinople and had been magnificently received by Tiberius. He praises his piety and zeal in composing the differences between members of the same communion. He further states that he assembled them, scolded them, and admonished them on account of the quarrels that had taken place among them; and he urged them to come to terms with one another, especially as they were members of the same faith, the same advice that he had given in person to Jacob and Paul, the two antagonists.

The Latin version of John of Ephesus on the efforts of Mundir in Constantinople reads as follows.

Quoniam, cum gloriosus Mondir patricius ad regem vocatus ascendisset et magnifice receptus esset, in omnia haec mala quae ab eis qui eiusdem fidei et eiusdem communionis inter se erant invicem patrari viderat zelum fortitudinis et Dei timoris induit. Tum is, ambabus partibus con-

²³ See *BASIC* I.1, 398–406.

²⁴ *HE*, p. 163, line 33–p. 164, line 1.

gregatis, de omnibus his malis et discidiis et contentionibus quae inter eos orta erant reprehendere et admonere et obiurgare incepit, eisque ut discidiis desisterent et certando ac contendo abstinerent et inter se conciliarentur suadebat, et praesertim pro eo quod eiusdem fidei inter se erant. Ab ipso enim initio etiam personas Paulum et Iacobum inter se conciliari et caritate uti cogebat et suadebat et obsecrabat.²⁵

The passage is a valuable one, in that it gives us a glimpse of the character and personality of Muṇḍir. He unites in his own person both the virtues of a valiant soldier and a good Christian. For the Latin "zelum fortitudinis et Dei timoris," the Syriac²⁶ has three distinct virtues: "ṭnānā, ganbarūta, diḥlat al-āhā," "zeal" or "enthusiasm," "manliness" or "heroism," and "fear of God." So the Arab virtues which became conjugates after the rise of Islam (*dīn* and *murū'a*) are already united in Muṇḍir.²⁷

The strength of his personality is reflected in what the historian says of his attitude toward the clerics when he assembled them. Before he advised them to come to terms with one another and be reconciled, he scolded and reproached them. The historian uses strong terms in describing the layman, addressing an assembly of reverend fathers.²⁸ As he suffered from no lack of veneration for the clerics, his attitude could only have been inspired by his impatience with their quarrelsomeness and his zeal for an accord, qualities which may be predicated of Muṇḍir as a general who wanted action and results and not words.

It is noteworthy that the historian who penned this passage on Muṇḍir was speaking from autopsy. As will be seen further on in this chapter, John of Ephesus personally attended the conference and thus watched Muṇḍir address the assembly personally. It is not clear whether Muṇḍir's appearance before the assembly of Monophysite ecclesiastics was preliminary to this later appearance at the formal conference which was to be held a little later on 2 March or was the same as this latter one. But this is how Muṇḍir appeared to his historian when he convened the assembly of Monophysite clerics, presided over it, and addressed it, on one of the occasions or on both of them.

John of Ephesus goes on to describe the conference of Constantinople and Muṇḍir's achievement at it. He devotes an entire chapter to it, and his account may be divided into two parts.

B

The title of the chapter speaks of the role of Muṇḍir as a mediator between the two parties: "CAPUT XL, de concilio et promisso pacis unionis

²⁵ Ibid., p. 164, lines 17-28.

²⁶ For the Syriac phrase, see *ibid.*, textus, p. 219, lines 12-13.

²⁷ On these two virtues, on I. Goldziher's views of them, and the Muḥammadan tradition (*ḥadīth*) that unites them, see *BASIC II*.

²⁸ He was even able to overwhelm the overbearing and domineering Damian.

mutuae quae ab utraque parte glorioso Mondir mediatore facta sunt."²⁹ The historian proceeds to say that after Mundir received from the emperor all that he wanted, he convened a conference on 2 March 580 to which he invited the three parties, the Jacobites, the Paulites, and the Alexandrians; that he besought them to cease from the quarrels that Satan had stirred up among them. He refers to the debate that then took place among the three parties, which included John himself. He notes that there were men of discernment in the three parties who regretted the violent deeds wrought by turbulent men among the three parties and that these rejoiced at the prospect of peace and the termination of hostilities, and it was their unanimous decision that they would unite again:

Cum igitur illustris Mondir quidquid voluit apud regem effecisset, deinde die mensis adār *die* secundo eius eiusdem anni concilium *virorum* insignium utriusque partis cum Alexandrinis convocavit, quos ut invicem conciliarentur et quaecunque a Satana inter eos commota erant tollerent et exstinguerent obsecrabat. Et, cum multa quae narrationem excedunt inter eos dicta et commota essent, iam non a duabus partibus, sed a tribus invicem a Iacobitis et a Paulitis, necnon ab Alexandrinis, cum parvitas nostra etiam inter eos *esset*, et quoniam in utraque parte multi prudentes erant, et de omnibus quae a turbulentis eorum qui in partibus supradictis *erant* procaciter et immaniter perpetrabantur se valde adflictabant et pace gaudebant tum, ut omnia haec mala tollerentur, omnes una se accommodaverunt, et promissa dederunt fore ut unio inter eos fieret.³⁰

The passage makes clear that Mundir's convocation of the conference took place after his meeting with Tiberius. This makes practically certain that it was convened with Tiberius' knowledge and approval since he had been working toward that end. It is noteworthy that Mundir did not invite every Monophysite of the three parties to the conference, only men of note, since it would have been difficult to deal with all of them, and he assumed that the rest who did not attend would concur with what their notable representatives had agreed to.

The passage makes clear that the Jacobite-Paulite schism no longer involved the two parties in Oriens but a third party, that of the Alexandrians, and indeed he refers explicitly to the *three* parties. In a sense, there were only two parties, since the Alexandrians sided with the Jacobites against the Paulites. But in view of the subsequent regional struggle between Alexandria and Antioch within the Monophysite church, John of Ephesus did well to refer to three parties and thus draw attention to the Alexandrians.

²⁹ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 165, lines 1–2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165, lines 2–16.

John of Ephesus refers to the debate which apparently was long, and so much so that he says that it was too long to be reported in full. So he only gave a brief summary of the important features of the debate. The three parties expressed their regrets for the violent deeds done by the turbulent members of each of them. And with this repentant mood, they expressed their joy at the prospect of peace and unanimously promised to bring about the union of the church. Coming, as it did, from three parties that had ferociously warred against one another, this could only have been a reflection of the courage and enthusiasm of the Ghassānid king who convened the conference, the qualities that John of Ephesus endowed him with. The assembled clerics could not resist the impact of the powerful personality of the redoubtable soldier of the Cross; his father before him had impressed imperial Constantinople itself during his visit of 563, including the future emperor Justin II. It is noteworthy that John of Ephesus speaks of himself as a participant and witness in this passage, where he modestly speaks of "our humble self" (*cum parvitas nostra etiam inter eos esset*).

The description of the debate among the three parties and Mundir's presidency of the conference raises the question of the language that Mundir spoke when he addressed them. John of Ephesus does not mention any interpreter, and the most natural presumption is that he spoke a language intelligible to all. It could not have been his native Arabic; it could not have been Coptic which he did not know and was intelligible only to the Alexandrians, or a portion of them; it could not have been Syriac, intelligible only to the Jacobites and Paulites of Oriens. It could only have been Greek, the language of cultural dominance in Oriens and of Christian theology.

C

John of Ephesus goes on to describe the second phase of the conference which followed their hopes and promises to unite: after all the parties had promised to have all their points of difference examined and be disposed of, they drew up a deed or instrument of union,³¹ by which their quarrels were to cease, and furthermore, all the orders of the clergy, monks, and laity should receive one another after this period of separation and estrangement. Then prayers were offered to God for this achievement and also promises that the participants at the conference would exert themselves to bring those that belonged to their parties but who were absent to accept the union and peace brought about there:

Et decretum est ut, dispensatione facta, omnes *res* adversae quae a Satana inter eos commotae erant desinerent et cognoscerentur et tollerentur.

³¹ *Ibid.*, lines 26–30.

Quamobrem, cum omnes huic *rei* adsensi essent, tum instrumentum etiam unionis inter eos factum est quod omnes discordias et contentiones quae inter eos factae erant sustulit, et *constituit* ut omnes archiepiscopi et episcopi et clerici et monachi (coenobia omnia), et laici qui divisi erant se invicem reciperent, et omnes una ad unionem mutuam sine contentione venirent.

Itaque preces unionis a sacerdotibus utriusque partis itemque ab Alexandrinis factae sunt; et facta est unio, cum omnes Deo gratias agerent qui malum et omnes qui eius et ab eo *sunt* de medio removit, et omnes promissum dedissent se studio usuros et omnes partis suae fautores qui corpore aberant ad unionem quae facta erat adducturos.³²

The *instrumentum unionis* (Syriac "ktābâ d'ḥûyādâ")³³ referred to by John of Ephesus is not reproduced by him as a document; he only refers to it and to its clauses in general terms. Evidently, it contained two principal clauses. The first involved members of the Monophysite communion represented by the three warring parties to the effect that they should henceforward receive one another. This applied to the archbishops, bishops, clerics, and monks of all the monasteries, and it applied to the laymen, too. Prior to this, members of each party would not receive members from the other, let alone communion. John of Ephesus, in his chapter on the Ghassānid involvement in this, stated that Jacob would not let them receive communion from Paul,³⁴ and that this divided the Ghassānid army into Paulites and Jacobites. So presumably the reference to the laymen could be to soldiers in the Ghassānid armies, among others.

The second clause involved members of each of the three parties, that they should exert every effort to bring those of their party who were absent to agree to the decisions of the conference on the peace and union of the church. This was an important matter since the failure of the conference eventually was due to the fact that those who belonged to these three parties but who did not attend the conference later agitated in Oriens and Egypt when they heard about it and were instrumental in bringing about the collapse of the agreement reached in Constantinople.

The chapter ends with a statement on the offering of thanks to God and Muṇḍir. Thus Muṇḍir emerges as the one who dominated the conference from beginning to end. He was the one who convened it, opened it with his address and recommendations, and with his commanding presence insured its success.³⁵ And so the conference ended as it began with prominence given to

³² For the Syriac phrase, see *ibid.*, textus, p. 220, lines 25–26.

³³ See above, 904.

³⁴ See above, 889–91.

³⁵ It is of interest to note that Muṇḍir's leadership at the conference of Constantinople is remembered in a later Syriac collection in the following manner:

Mundir, with thanks offered to him from communities that extended from the valley of the Nile to the Land of the Two Rivers, thus making him a Near Eastern figure and not merely a local or regional one in Oriens: "Concilium vero in pace et gaudio dissolutum est, cum omnes Deo itemque illustri Mondir gratias haberent."³⁶

D

After a digression on Damian, the patriarch of Alexandria, which occupies the whole of chapter 41, John of Ephesus returns to Mundir and describes in chapter 42 the sequel to the conference of Constantinople. The Ghassānid king intercedes with Tiberius for the freeing of the Alexandrian clergy whom the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, John, had sent to the capital and whom the Chalcedonian patriarch of Constantinople had incarcerated. The clergy are set free, given presents by Mundir, and leave for Egypt. Mundir returns again to Tiberius for the final meeting to negotiate this time for Dyophysite-Monophysite relations, for the peace of the church, and for termination of the persecution that had been unleashed against the Monophysites by Chalcedonian Byzantium during the reign of Justin II. He swears to Tiberius that if the latter were to do this, he would also act likewise and bring the desired peace to the church. The negotiations are entirely successful, and Tiberius gives his promise that he would act accordingly, thus setting the seal on the complete success that Mundir scored during his stay in Constantinople:

CAPUT XLII, quomodo clerici alexandrini, itemque postea ipse Mondir ab urbe regia dimissi sint. Quoniam igitur Alexandrini cum laicis insignibus propter rationem fidei in urbe regia propter mandatum comprehensi erant, postquam concilium factum est et dimissum, gloriosus Mondir ingressus regem misericordem Tiberium de eis obsecravit, qui eos dimisit. Et eis mandatum datum est, necnon res magnas eis fecit ob causam unionis quam fecerunt. Itaque gaudentes exierunt, et, nave conscensa, ad urbem suam abierunt. Post haec vero gloriosus Mondir ob-

And while this division lasted a long time and many bishops died and also influential persons, finally there came to them Mundir bar Ḥārit, the king of the Arabs, a Christian man and lover of God and who was much grieved about the decline of the orthodox (people). And he brought together the two parties and admonished them and rebuked them and blamed them, leaving (room) for a true inquiry and through (wise) steering brought about their peace and established their unity. In this way these separated members were reconciled with one another prudently, however, beyond the strictness (of the canons).

The passage comes in chap. 84, "A Discourse concerning Ecclesiastical Leadership," *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, trans. A. Vööbus, *Scriptores Syri*, vol. 164 (Louvain, 1976), II, p. 183.

³⁶ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 166, lines 7–8.

secravit ut ipse etiam dimitteretur, et regem misericordem de pace ecclesiae etiam obsecravit, et ut Christianorum persecutio conquiesceret. Qui ei cum iureiurando promisit se, si a bellis inquieturus esset, pacem statim facturum.³⁷

The Alexandrian clergy referred to in the passage were those sent by the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, John, to Constantinople, where his opposite number, Patriarch Eutychius, incarcerated them after they refused to communicate with him and go over to the Dyophysite position. That Mundir should have made it his business to work with Tiberius for their emancipation says much for his circumspection. The Egyptian contingent at the conference of Constantinople was an important one, and Mundir must have noted that Alexandria now had a powerful patriarch in the person of Damian whom he had encountered at the preliminary conference. So this was an excellent gesture on the part of the Ghassānid king for winning the goodwill of the Egyptians, although even this did not insure their ultimate collaboration. In order to cement the newly forged alliance with the Alexandrians, he even gave them presents and made sure that they were on board and on their way to Alexandria. Apparently, it was only then that he went back to Tiberius, expressed in the text, *post haec*.³⁸ He himself had been the object of imperial intrigues and bad faith in the early 570s, and this perhaps made him extremely careful in accepting promises from the imperial government.

Now that he had accomplished all that he had set out to do within the Monophysite camp, he returned to Tiberius with a good bargaining position; he had pacified the Monophysite church and its warring parties, and had extracted a written instrument or deed of union, and so he could negotiate with Tiberius from a position of strength. The next hurdle was that of Monophysite-Dyophysite reconciliation for which Tiberius was anxious. The most burning issue was the persecution unleashed by Chalcedonian Byzantium against the Monophysites after the failure of Justin II's generous gesture with the Second Henotikon. Mundir asks for its termination as the basis of the reconciliation, and swears that if the king would grant this, he for his part would react accordingly and throw all his weight toward effecting the reconciliation and the peace of the church.³⁹ This Tiberius granted, and thus Mun-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168, lines 14–27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, line 22.

³⁹ The language of John of Ephesus here could be misleading. Mundir swears that if the king would cease from military proceeding, he (Mundir) would make peace. The words used, *a bellis* and *pacem*, could suggest real war, but as Pauline Allen has well argued, what was involved was the *ecclesiastical* war between the Dyophysites and the Monophysites. This is confirmed beyond any doubt by the use of the word *pacem* later in the passage (*HE*, p. 167, line 4) in the clearly ecclesiastical context of confessional war. The passage is correctly understood by

ḍir set the seal on the astounding success which he scored on all fronts in Constantinople in February and March of 580.

IV. THE SEQUEL TO THE CONFERENCE

The second phase of Muḍir's effort to bring peace to his church begins with his departure from Constantinople and his journey to Oriens. He asks Tiberius for permission to leave after the completion of his mission; the emperor grants his permission and, moreover, gives him magnificent presents and the right to wear a higher-grade crown. Muḍir travels and reaches another capital, that of Oriens, Antioch, where he is received by the authorities. There he makes known the wishes of Tiberius concerning the peace of the church and the agreement reached with him, especially concerning the termination of the persecution of the Monophysites. The patriarch then has letters written to the provinces to that effect, and so the persecution stops for a short time:

Itaque hac promissione *data* eum cum magnis honoribus dimisit, et donis regiis auri et argenti multi et vestibus splendidis, et ephippiis et frenis multis argenteis et armis. Et praeter haec omnia diadema etiam regium ei donavit, quod usque ad hunc nullis regibus Ṭayāye umquam fuerat nec datum erat, sed nonnisi coronam tantum sumere eis fas erat. Itaque dimissus est et pompa et laetitia magna exiit. Quamobrem, cum Antiochiam pervenisset, et ibi etiam receptus est, et, regis voluntate et promissionibus et iureiurando eius de unione ecclesiae confisus, eum et persecutionem conquiescere iussisse urbis patriarchae et ceteris nuntiavit. Et statim patriarcha mandavit et ad omnes provincias scriptum est, ne quis persecutionem facere auderet, quod rex mandasset et pacem facere quaereret. Itaque paulisper conquievit persecutio.⁴⁰

The great pomp with which Muḍir was sent off from Constantinople, indicated in this passage, has been analyzed with much detail in a previous chapter in this volume,⁴¹ but it is quoted again in this section as the appropriate background for Muḍir's departure. It was reflective of the great hopes that Tiberius had pinned on Muḍir, and Tiberius' rather unexpected reaction to later accusations against Muḍir may be related to the disappointment he experienced when Muḍir ultimately failed to bring about a reconciliation of the warring Monophysite parties.

Allen (*Evagrius*, 35), that it was with reference to the confessional "war," and that peace here meant that Muḍir "undertook to maintain the union between the dissident Monophysite groups." It is also possible that, in dealing with the Monophysites, the central government had used troops to enforce obedience to imperial Chalcedonian edicts. That is the context that *a bellis* could yield in the form of military action.

⁴⁰ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 168, line 27—p. 169, line 4.

⁴¹ *BASIC* I.1, 398–406.

Mundir would have traveled by the state post from Constantinople to Antioch and would have arrived there by late spring⁴² since he must have left late in March. Antioch was, of course, the great port of call for him and his cause. It was the capital of Oriens and the see of the patriarchate. Above all, its Dyophysite see was occupied by the powerful and notoriously anti-Monophysite Gregory. Mundir met him in Antioch and must also have met the *magister militum per Orientem* who resided in the same city.

The passage in John of Ephesus expatiates on what the earlier part of the chapter had laconically told concerning the agreement between Tiberius and Mundir. It is clear from it that Tiberius had given promises, made solemn by oaths which he had sworn, that he would bring about the peace of the church, and that the persecution of the Monophysites should cease. Evidently there were some written documents handed over to Gregory concerning the termination of the persecution. With an imperial order before him, Gregory could only obey, and so he had letters written to the various provinces in his patriarchate to that effect. Thus the persecution ceased at least for a short time.

Although John of Ephesus is the primary source for these events, Michael the Syrian, late though he is, has a version of the course of events at Antioch that is not an exact replica of John's. In Chabot's French translation it reads as follows.

Sur la demande de Mondar l'empereur écrivit des lettres en tous lieux et spécialement à Gregorius, patriarche chalcédonien d'Antioche, en vue de la paix des Églises. Il permit à chacun de louer (Dieu) comme il l'entendait et de se réunir où il voulait. Mondar aidait beaucoup les Ἀτακτινόμενοι, c'est-à-dire les Orthodoxes; car il était de leur opinion. Mais Gregorius d'Antioche ne voulut pas de la paix et ne permit pas de lire la lettre de l'empereur. Tandis que Mondar était occupé à faire proclamer l'édit en tous lieux, des envoyés vinrent lui annoncer de la part de ses enfants que les Perses se préparaient à envahir son pays. Aussi partit-il rapidement, et l'affaire des Églises resta en suspens. Alors les hérétiques firent annuler l'édit de l'empereur et continuèrent à maltraiter les fidèles.⁴³

The passage in Michael the Syrian is noteworthy for its details as to what the accord with Tiberius meant to the Monophysites and in that it gives a different account of Gregory's reaction to Tiberius' orders. The details consist in allowing the Monophysites to praise their Lord (to pray) as they thought proper, presumably according to the doctrines of their confession. More im-

⁴² On the duration of the journey from Nisibis to Constantinople, as taking three months, see *ibid.*, 519.

⁴³ *Chronique*, II, 344.

portant is permission for them to assemble anywhere they wanted. This implies that they could now worship in places that had been closed to them by the Dyophysites, including Antioch. This account sounds authentic and is a welcome addition to John's, which is laconic on the terms of the accord with Tiberius as it is on the *instrumentum unionis* among the Monophysites.

Surprising, however, is his account of Gregory's reaction. Whereas in John's account, Gregory was receptive and obedient to the emperor's orders and so had letters written to the provinces informing them of the imperial wishes, Michael's presents him in an unreceptive mood: he took the imperial order ill and disobeyed it, so that Muḍir himself had to write the letters to various places in Oriens. John's account is likely to be the more accurate one, since he was a contemporary and primary source, while Michael's could reflect the dislike which the Monophysites harbored toward Gregory, notorious for his anti-Monophysite stance. So what Michael says on Gregory's reaction most probably represents the later stage in the unfolding of this drama of intrigues when Gregory was party to the conspiracy against Muḍir and when the persecution of the Monophysites was resumed.

It is not difficult, however, to conclude from either account that Gregory was not thrilled by all this. He was clearly not consulted; Muḍir had clearly bypassed him and gone directly to Tiberius in Constantinople, where he negotiated all these matters, against the wishes and apparently the knowledge of Patriarch Gregory. The latter no doubt would have preferred to be consulted and not only to be informed of the outcome of the negotiations which made him an outsider to an ecclesiastical issue that was very much his business and within his jurisdiction. That he was not the only member of the Dyophysite ecclesiastical establishment who was not made happy by Muḍir's success will become clear further on in this chapter.

Immediately after his return, Muḍir won the smashing victory over his Lakhmid enemies, the allies of Persia against Byzantium, no doubt stimulated by the euphoria that attended his success on the ecclesiastical front in Constantinople. Thus the late spring or the summer of 580 saw the climax of his meteoric career on both the military and ecclesiastical fronts.

V. THE BIENNIUM OF 580/81: THE ANTICLIMAX

The period after the summer of 580 until the end of 581 or the beginning of 582 represents the third and final phase of this period. It is the anticlimax to the splendid successes of 580, and it ended with disaster for Muḍir and a course of events that eventually proved disastrous for Byzantium itself. Hence the importance of ascertaining exactly what happened to Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. The problem is not only important to ecclesiastical but also to secular history, and it has not been examined thoroughly.

After an *annus mirabilis* of successes on all fronts and a send-off charac-

terized by barbaric splendor on the part of the emperor toward his client-king and attended by high expectations, there began a period of a year or so characterized by unrelieved failures on all fronts with sharp disappointments that must have matched in their intensity the high expectations of both. The hero suddenly becomes the victim and villain, and the punishment meted out to him was nothing less than an arrest, a charge of treason, and a long exile. What, then, were the forces that brought about the change in the imperial mood that finally caused the downfall of Mundir and the collapse of the efforts to unite the Christian church in the Orient?

The Monophysite Reaction

In his account of these events of the third phase, John of Ephesus' narrative, sporadic and rambling, begins with the Monophysite rejection of the accords of the conference of Constantinople. In chapter 40 of Book IV, in which he gave a full account of the conference, he inserted a digression on the subsequent reaction to it. He spoke of turbulent and iniquitous men who had not taken part in the conference, which was chiefly restricted, and naturally so, to the chiefs and the notables of the Monophysite community. Those who were absent took offense at their exclusion, agitated both in Syria and in Alexandria, won over many to their cause, and worked strenuously to annul the accords reached at the conference:

Turbulenti autem nonnulli et tumultuarii forte fuerunt, qui sordium iniquitatis pleni pacem factam molestissime tulerunt nec ea gavisii sunt; et, quoniam concilium *virorum* primorum et insignium apud regem Mondir factum est, nec multitudine totius populi ei opus fuit, hac de causa praesertim quod totius multitudinis ratio non habita est nec vocata est, nonnulli in contrariam *partem* se verterunt et id quod factum est tollere studuerunt. Qui congregati coetum fecerunt et scripserunt et turbas commoverunt, tum in Syria tota tum Alexandriae, et multos conturbaverunt ut obsisterent neu se accomodarent neu id quod factum est acciperent, quod Satanam et omnes daemonum eius grege delectavit.⁴⁴

Noteworthy in this passage is the fact that dissatisfaction with the accords of Constantinople existed not only in Egypt but also in Syria itself, which in this context means Oriens as opposed to Egypt. It is best to begin with the situation in the former.

Oriens

As happened in the 560s, when attempts were made to bring about accord at Callinicum in 567, the monks and some of the clergy were the representatives of extremism and the rejection of all compromise. Unfor-

⁴⁴ *HE*, p. 165, line 30–p. 166, line 8.

tunately, John of Ephesus did not give the text of the *instrumentum unionis*, drawn up at the conference of Constantinople. But whatever it was, there must have been clauses in it that did not appeal to the extremists who felt left out. In addition to the Monophysite clergy in Oriens, there were of course the Ghassānid armies that had also been divided in their loyalties toward Paul and Jacob. But it is unlikely that discord within the Ghassānid armies was significant. Immediately after his return from Constantinople, Muṅḍir united his armies and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Lakhmids, partly explicable by the new morale infused into the Ghassānids by the recent accords. Muṅḍir could control Ghassānid soldiers but not Monophysite clerics.

The schism among Monophysite clergy in Oriens, however, was real, and John of Ephesus has preserved data that reflect this division in the ranks of the Monophysites of the region in connection with the election of Peter of Calinicum as the new patriarch of Antioch in place of the incumbent Paul.⁴⁵ In this transaction Muṅḍir is conspicuous by his absence, especially as the Ghassānid dynasty had by now been recognized as *fidei defensores* of Monophysitism. Muṅḍir's father was instrumental in the election of Paul and protected him during his troubles, and so did Muṅḍir. The canonicity of Peter's election was a point much debated even by the new patriarch himself, who had scruples of conscience about being elected while the duly consecrated patriarch of Antioch, Paul, was still alive. Muṅḍir, who, like his father before him, was a staunch supporter of Paul, would certainly have disapproved of the election of Peter on grounds of both canon law and Arab *jiwār* and *walā'* toward Paul. Hence the silence of the sources on Muṅḍir in connection with Peter's election suggests that it was done without his knowledge or approval and that the extreme Monophysites, old partisans of Jacob, were still strong and influential in the Oriens of Muṅḍir.

Egypt

More important was what happened in Egypt, where the Monophysites were stronger and now better organized, presided over by the newly elected patriarch, the Syrian Damian, who played a crucial role in inflaming passions in Oriens against Paul. The Alexandrian delegation at the conference, as well as the clergy who had been set free from Constantinopolitan jails by Muṅḍir, must have faced the same problem that the Oriental ones faced when they went back to their colleagues in Alexandria—rejection of the accords in the discussion of which those absent in Alexandria were not included. But more important than the opposition of these elements in Egypt is the fact that the Monophysite church of Egypt was now run by a powerful ecclesiastic, the new

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Book IV, chap. 45, p. 171, line 12–p. 172, line 26.

patriarch, Damian. He proved to be a disturbing force that contributed substantially to the enhancement of discord within the ranks of the Monophysite church in this period that immediately followed the conference, a discord that culminated in a formal schism between Antioch and Alexandria that lasted until 616.

Although he owed much to Mundir, who protected him, met him at night on his arrival in Constantinople after his flight from Antioch,⁴⁶ and met him again at the conference where Damian gave his full assent to the accords as the head of the Egyptian delegation, he immediately and completely changed his position on his return to Alexandria.⁴⁷ What were the reasons behind this change? A few preliminary observations have already been made earlier in this chapter, and the following four points will complement and elaborate on them.

1. No doubt, like his Syrian colleagues who had signed the accords, Damian found himself facing an angry Alexandrian clergy that rejected them.⁴⁸ He, therefore, had to choose between concord at home in his patriarchate and discord with Oriens and Mundir, and he apparently chose the former.

2. It is possible that he inherited from his predecessor, Peter IV, the latter's animus toward Paul and the Paulites, and Peter had gone the length of deposing Paul. Damian had been the protégé of Peter who had brought him from his monastery to that of Enaton, where he became deacon and secretary to him, and Damian owed Peter his subsequent elevation to the patriarchate.

3. Perhaps he also reflected the old Alexandrian self-image of the see of St. Mark as superior to that of Antioch; hence his assertiveness almost bordering on aggressiveness. He must have been encouraged by the fact that the see of Antioch was in complete disarray because of Paul and that for some time it was virtually vacant. Twice had the ranking Monophysites in the Patriarchate of Antioch come to Alexandria. Jacob made the journey twice in the 570s, and now Peter of Callinicum, after his election at Mār Ḥanīna, came to Damian for consecration. Even before he arrived in Constantinople for the conference in the winter of 580, he quite fearlessly tried to consecrate a Monophysite patriarch of Antioch in the city itself, which he entered by night and which he had to leave hurriedly and under humiliating circumstances after his plan to consecrate had been reported to Gregory, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch.⁴⁹

4. Damian was deemed to be a very respectable theologian.⁵⁰ It is not

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 168, lines 8–11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 169, lines 25–30.

⁴⁸ Ibid., lines 25–26; Müller, "Damian," 128.

⁴⁹ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 166, line 9–p. 168, line 6.

⁵⁰ Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 491.

altogether impossible that his renunciation of what he had sworn to in Constantinople and his subsequent theological bout with Peter of Callinicum were inspired by genuine conviction that his was the true, orthodox Monophysite position.

Whatever his motives were in his renunciation of the accords of Constantinople, Damian was a major factor in undoing the work of Mundir and bringing about his downfall.⁵¹ John of Ephesus is more explicit on him than on the Syrians, and he almost lays the blame at Damian's doorstep in chapter 43 of Book IV of his *Ecclesiastical History*. In that chapter he states that on his return to Alexandria he was blamed for making peace with Paul; hence he went back on the promises he had given to Mundir. He even wrote anathemas against Paul and sent a circular letter on Paul to Syria, which was used there by turbulent people who stirred up schisms in the region. Not only Damian but also the Alexandrian clergy that Mundir helped set free through intercession with Tiberius acted likewise and went back on the promises they had given to Mundir. The Latin version of John of Ephesus, describing this unfortunate turn of events in Egypt, reads as follows.

CAPUT XLIII, de eodem Damiano, et de mendacio eius et quomodo pacem in urbe regia factam inique everterit, necnon de eis clericis qui mutati sunt et ipsi etiam promissa fefellerunt. Damianus vero syrus imperiosus, qui tempore dignus erat ut Alexandriae *patriarcha* fieret, idem cuius supra mentio facta est, cum Alexandriam pervenisset et a quibusdam propter Paulum reprehensus esset, deinde ut hominibus placeret et non Deo, vel ecclesiae paci studeret, dicto revocato promissum suum ad gloriosum Mondir et ad ceteros fideles qui ex utraque parte eum obsecraverunt *factum* fefellit, et mutatus est, et Paulo adversatus est; et in eum anathemata et probra et contumelias asperas scripsit, nec suffecit ut ipse solus his *rebus* uteretur, sed ut in epistula encyclica etiam, hoc est circulari, omnia scripserit et ad Syriam et quoquoersus in ditione sua et extra ditionem miserit. Quae epistulae eius viris turbulentis et immanibus praecipue datae sunt, qui cum Satana coniuncti erant et currebant et laborabant, nec cum Christo congregaverunt, sed in contrarium currentes re vera sparserunt, qui studiose commotiones et turbas conciverunt, et discidia exagitaverunt et contentiones germinaverunt, et iurgia et rixas et contumelias, et quaecunque diabolo cordi sunt magis quam antea fecerunt.

Sua vero, et fortasse haud indecorum est dicere et Saranae etiam, et in clericis etiam operatus est qui in concilio unionis quod in urbe regia factum est adfuerunt. Quamobrem ei etiam cum eo Spiritui sancto men-

⁵¹ Frend (*Rise*, 341) thinks that his Syrian origin explains his aggressiveness.

titi sunt, et dictum revocaverunt, postquam studio Mondir recreati et soluti sunt et ex angustia exierunt, propterea quod ante eum et ante coetum multum unionem promiserunt et uniti sunt, et scripto etiam nominibus suis fecerunt, qua de causa etiam soluti sunt et e custodiis et e carceribus exierunt, et 'averterunt se et mentiti sunt quemadmodum patres eorum', ut pater eorum videlicet Damianus, qui eis dignus est et quo ei.⁵²

In addition to laying the blame squarely on Damian and after describing his violation of the promises he gave to Mundir and his divisive activity, John of Ephesus gives an account of the reaction of Mundir to Damian's machinations which he became aware of after his return from his victorious campaign against the Lakhmids in the summer of 580. John describes his sorrow at Damian's circular letters and how he took the trouble of writing letters to each of the Alexandrian clergy by name, in which he admonished them for playing false against God, the church, and himself. But these neither received his letters nor answered them because of shame and mortification. Consequently Mundir was deeply offended and must have felt betrayed because Damian's letters were disastrous for the peace of the church in Oriens, since they fueled its fires and enhanced the noise that was already rocking it.

The Latin version of John of Ephesus' account of Mundir's reaction to Damian's circular letters reads as follows:

Quamobrem, cum rex Mondir, postquam a caede hostium suorum rediit, de mutatione eorum etiam didicisset et quomodo a veritate ad mendacium immodicum perversi essent, adflictus est et eum piguit, et praeter haec miratus est; et epistulis encyclicis Damiani praesertim obstipuit, quae ab improbitate completa haud multum aberant. Quamobrem Mondir ad unumquemque eorum nomine eius scribere non praetermisit eosque de mendacio eorum in Deum et in se et in totam ecclesiam *facto* admonuit et obiurgavit. Ei autem ob *causam* dedecoris sui et pudoris nec litteras eius recipere nec responsum etiam ei facere potuerunt. Itaque indignatus est, cum ob has causas fornax irae in totam ecclesiam fidelium magis arderet et ferveret et flagraret, necnon incrementum magis discidorum et contentionum et probrorum et contumeliarum et rixarum quae inter duas partes semper effrenate et sine timore Iudicis aequi ardentem flagrabant.⁵³

Mundir's zeal, enthusiasm, and energy commented upon by John of Ephesus are fully expressed in this passage. The names of each and every one

⁵² John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 169, line 20–p. 170, line 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 170, lines 18–33.

of the Alexandrian clergy he evidently had with him, since, as has been said earlier in the chapter, they had signed their names during the conference of Constantinople giving assurances that they would be reconciled. This is the list that Mundir kept with him, and so he must have used it now to write them the letters. The letters must have been in Greek. As has been argued previously, this was the common language for the multiethnic and multilingual community of Monophysites in the Near East.

John of Ephesus' interpretation of the non-communicativeness of the Alexandrians is probably correct. Mundir had obliged them by interceding in their behalf, and they must have felt ashamed that they had not kept their word.⁵⁴ Mundir must have felt completely betrayed on all fronts. He had worked hard to bring about the union of the church by bringing the parties together. He had then interceded with the emperor for the staying of the persecution and the setting free of the Alexandrian clergy. He had given them presents and sent them off safely to Alexandria. Damian he received at night when the former came as a refugee from Antioch having fled that city, after Gregory discovered his intrigue to consecrate a Monophysite patriarch in Antioch itself. Now both Damian and the Alexandrians betrayed him, and so did the Jacobites of Oriens. More betrayals were in store for him on the part of the Chalcedonians, including Magnus, his own *patronus*.

The Dyophysite Reaction

The sources are not as informative on the Chalcedonian as they are on the Monophysite reaction. John of Ephesus, the primary source, provides a few data; he is expansive on what the Monophysites in both Oriens and Egypt did, especially the latter, but hardly anything is said on the Dyophysite reaction. He does, however, provide one datum as important as it is revelatory.

In chapter 42 of Book IV he describes the triumphant return of Mundir to Antioch and his encounter with its Dyophysite patriarch, Gregory, and the latter's execution of the order of Tiberius concerning the termination of the persecution of the Monophysites in the provinces. He also states that when the Dyophysites of Constantinople heard all this, they were furious with the Ghassānid king and hastened to accuse him before Tiberius, but he did not

⁵⁴ Müller ("Damian," 128) thinks that the Alexandrians did not vouchsafe him an answer and that he was without influence in Egypt. There may be some confusion in the narrative of John of Ephesus on the Alexandrian clergy. Those who were imprisoned in the jails of Constantinople by Eutychius did not attend the conference of 2 March since they were freed *after* it through the good offices of Mundir. Those who signed the *instrumentum unionis* were the other group of Alexandrians who attended the conference. And these were the ones that went back on their word, but it was not they whom Mundir had set free. Perhaps the inconsistency may be reconciled by assuming that the former group had also promised to support the *instrumentum unionis* after Mundir set them free and sent them off to Alexandria.

listen to their accusations: "Quamobrem, cum hoc Diphysitae urbis regiae audivissent, ira magna in Mondir commoti, sine mora ingressi eum ante regem vehementer incusaverunt; *ille* autem Dei amans aurem *eis* non praebuilt."⁵⁵

This paragraph, thrown in parenthetically in the middle of a chapter on Mundir's successes, illuminates the obscurity that surrounds the place of the Dyophysite party during those winter months in Constantinople when Mundir was negotiating for the peace of his church. The Dyophysites are conspicuous by their absence in a transaction that was very much their business and within their jurisdiction. And yet the scene is occupied by seculars—the *autokrator* and his federate king—while the ecclesiastics who appear in the limelight were the Monophysites. The paragraph cited from John of Ephesus enables the following conclusions to be drawn.

First and most astounding is that Tiberius had conducted all these negotiations without allowing the Dyophysites of the capital, including their patriarch, to participate. Not only this, but it is clear from the paragraph that all these negotiations were conducted in secret; the Dyophysites were not even kept apprised of what happened nor did they appear to know of the *instrumentum unionis*, the deed of union that was agreed upon and signed by the three Monophysite parties at the conference.

This is perfectly consonant with the ardent desire of Tiberius to solve the ecclesiastical problem which had plagued his empire and which he also considered related to the military problems of the barbarians that were threatening it. The scene in which two patriarchs, first John Scholasticus and then his successor Eutychius, come to him for continuing the repression of the Monophysites can serve as a background for this extraordinary situation. The emperor sternly rebukes his patriarchs for recommending such a course when he had enough barbarians or external enemies to deal with.⁵⁶ The two visits must have made the emperor suspicious of his patriarchs and must have convinced him that he could not expect any constructive thinking from them toward solving the Monophysite problem. Hence his decision to exclude them from the deliberations and to call on one who, like himself, was a non-ecclesiastic, namely, Mundir, for help. And he could not have made a better choice in view of the prestige and influence of the Ghassānid royal house in the Monophysite world. So, as it turned out, it was two secular personages, the emperor and his client-king, who directed the negotiations for solving the ecclesiastical problem.

The decision of Tiberius to conduct these negotiations by excluding the Dyophysite establishment in the capital adds a new dimension to the person-

⁵⁵ John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 169, lines 5–8.

⁵⁶ See above, 898–99.

ality of Tiberius. He has been deemed a good-natured and gentle emperor,⁵⁷ but his decision on the conduct of these negotiations proves that he could be decisive and capable of carrying through a bold policy independently in a matter he considered vital to the interests of the empire.

Gregory had to write letters to the provinces of his patriarchate by order of Tiberius for terminating the persecution, but he also must have written letters of his own to his counterpart in Constantinople, Patriarch Eutychius, informing him of what had happened. This is most natural to assume, since Dyophysite Constantinople heard of the *instrumentum unionis* and the cessation of hostilities against the Monophysites from those in Antioch. And he may even have written letters to his counterpart in Alexandria, too. Thus Gregory emerges as the chief protagonist in this drama of intrigues as it unfolded itself. The beginning of the end for Mundir was ushered in not by the secular military establishment but by the ecclesiastical. Although the three Chalcedonian patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria could not have cherished the spectacle of the redrawing of the ecclesiastical map of the empire without their participation, Gregory was the one most concerned. The powerful Ghassānid king who protected the Monophysites of his patriarchate was a thorn in his side; and it must have been Gregory among the patriarchs who spearheaded the opposition to Mundir's plan and took an active part in the plot that finally brought about the downfall of the Ghassānid king.

The Imperial Reaction

A previous chapter in this volume has discussed in detail the fall of Mundir within the political and military context of Byzantine history around 581/82. Now the ecclesiastical dimension that contributed to his fall may be discussed. The preceding sections have explained the ecclesiastical situation that obtained around 581 and that led Tiberius to make the decision that led to the arrest of Mundir. As Tiberius' decision was a historic one that turned out to be fraught with grave consequences for Byzantium and Arab-Byzantine relations, it is necessary to analyze the thinking that led him to make that decision, especially as a detailed analysis of this has not been attempted in histories of the reign. The primary source, John of Ephesus, is laconic about it, while modern historians treat it in a perfunctory manner. This has left Tiberius' own judgment under a cloud, as it did the Ghassānid phylarchate/*Basileia* represented by Mundir. What happened to Tiberius that made him make that disastrous decision?

1. Mundir's efforts to bring about peace in the summer of 580 and shortly after saw the emperor solidly and faithfully behind his client-king; as the passage in John of Ephesus has clearly indicated, the Dyophysites of the

⁵⁷ For this judgment on the part of one who knew him personally and intimately, namely, John of Ephesus, see *HE*, p. 110, lines 19–35.

capital were furious when they heard of what Mundir achieved in the Patriarchate of Antioch after his return from Constantinople and his meeting with Gregory in Antioch. They hurried to the emperor to complain, but he gave no ear to their accusations, no doubt hoping that his policy of toleration and compromise with the Monophysites under the leadership of Mundir would succeed, and he wanted to allow time for the plan to be carried out.

The second phase, which opened a year or so after the summer of 580, witnessed the reversal in the attitude of the emperor, rather startling from one who reposed so much confidence in his client-king and whom he had received and entertained royally. The Dyophysite ecclesiastical establishment represented by the three patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, who no doubt were in touch with one another, could no longer be resisted. Now that Mundir had failed to unite his Monophysites, their case became strong and irresistible. Tiberius had gone the length of ignoring his own patriarch in Constantinople and negotiating with the Monophysites as if this patriarch had not existed. And now he was embarrassed by the realization that his bold attempt to solve the ecclesiastical problem singlehandedly had failed. He himself was now vulnerable and so was his judgment in trusting the Monophysites and their secular leader, Mundir. Mundir of course was not to blame for the failure of his efforts. He himself was betrayed by the extremists among the Monophysites, especially the Egyptians whom he had set free and loaded with gifts. But that did not change the fact that in the view of Constantinople he had failed, and his failure had focused attention on the "bad" judgment of the emperor who had placed confidence in his client-king to the alienation of his own ecclesiastical establishment.

2. A previous chapter in this volume⁵⁸ has analyzed the second pressure that was brought to bear on the emperor—the secular pressure that Maurice, his *magister militum*, exercised on Tiberius. That, too, passed through two stages, and in this it paralleled the pressure from the ecclesiastical establishment. This may be briefly referred to here for completing the picture and for bringing out an ecclesiastical dimension to the secular arm. The first stage: Tiberius stood by his client-king when Maurice wrote to him from the front complaining about Mundir and his conduct in the joint expedition against Ctesiphon. He refused to entertain the accusations against him and actually appointed mediators to compose the differences between Maurice and Mundir. The second stage: Maurice came to see the emperor in person in Constantinople and accused Mundir of *prodosia*, treason to the state. That there was no truth in the accusation did not matter; what mattered was that it was made by none other than the future emperor and prospective son-in-law of Tiberius, and so in a sense the closest citizen to Tiberius, one whose wishes he could not ignore.

⁵⁸ See BASIC I.1, 444–48

Although Maurice was not a cleric, it is possible, even probable, that his antipathy toward Muḏīr also had an ecclesiastical base which should be discussed in the context of this chapter. Maurice was a staunch Chalcedonian, and this doctrinal stance may have been operative in his hostile attitude. His Chalcedonian Dyophysitism was well known to Chalcedonian Constantinople, already hostile to Muḏīr and plotting against him. Maurice's appearance in the capital at this juncture may thus have been especially fatal to Muḏīr's standing with Tiberius, since both the secular and the ecclesiastical arms in the capital now united in an unholy alliance for Muḏīr's undoing. If the patriarch of Constantinople had been a *persona non grata* with Tiberius because of his violent anti-Monophysite policy that had alienated the emperor, the prospective son-in-law was not, but was close to Tiberius. Thus it was possible to reach the ear of the emperor through Maurice, who thus may have represented at the court both the secular and ecclesiastical hostility toward Muḏīr. The combination of the representatives of the *magisterium* of the Orient and the Patriarchate of Constantinople was a formidable one, and this must have been the solid opposition front that finally broke the will of Tiberius and brought about the downfall of Muḏīr.⁵⁹

The two pressures must have projected an uncomplimentary image of the emperor in Constantinople, who, in the perception of those around him, secular and ecclesiastical, had made a great blunder. He had trusted his client-king to solve the religious problem in the empire and to cooperate in the all-important military command of 581 against Ctesiphon. On both counts the expected results did not materialize, and in connection with one of them—the military assignment—he was accused of high treason to the state. This must have been the image of the emperor in that year—that of a blunderer, a dim image especially in view of the fact that the Byzantine monarchy was Chalcedonian and the *fidei defensor* of orthodoxy since the advent of the house of Justin I in 518.

The emperor did not enjoy very good health and indeed died shortly after in 582. He was succeeded by none other than Maurice, Muḏīr's accuser and inveterate enemy. It is only natural that, with all this depressing background for his own image, with the disastrous Persian campaign, and with an Orient and Egypt still rampant with heresy and sectarian strife, he should succumb this time to the anti-Monophysite faction in Constantinople. In the summer

⁵⁹ The collaboration between the *magisterium* and the patriarchate in the conception of the plot against Muḏīr is confirmed by its execution, when Magnus and Gregory lure Muḏīr to Ḥuwwārīn for the dedication of the church. Magnus represents the secular military arm and Gregory the ecclesiastical. Maurice certainly knew the patriarch of Constantinople, and he most probably knew Gregory personally. Upon his appointment as *magister*, Maurice went to Syria in order to recruit, and so he could have met Gregory at Antioch.

of 580 he had turned a deaf ear to the calumniators of Muḍīr, but now he listened and acted and let the authorities deal with him. It must have been a painful decision to make, in view of the fact that Muḍīr had been the object of a previous treacherous plot on the part of Justin II in the early 570s, and it was during the co-regency of Tiberius⁶⁰ that he was reconciled after a moving scene before the *martyrion* of St. Sergius at Ruṣāfa. Since then, the Ghassānid king had served Byzantium well and won signal military triumphs. As recently as the winter of 580, he was received magnificently by Tiberius and dispatched with equal magnificence to Antioch in order that he might bring peace to religious life in Oriens. When Muḍīr was brought to Constantinople and stayed under house arrest, he was not allowed to see Tiberius. Stein has suggested that this was another piece of evidence for his innocence from the absurd charge, trumped up and trumpeted, for fear that he might convince the emperor, his old friend, of the falsity of the charge.⁶¹ But there is another reason which may be suggested—Tiberius' embarrassment to face an old friend who had already been betrayed once⁶² and whom he had sent off magnificently only a year ago; and now he had been betrayed once more by a combination of forces in the capital which the emperor himself, now ailing, was unable to resist.

It is noteworthy that the plot to arrest him was prepared within an ecclesiastical context. He was invited to attend the consecration of a church in Ḥuwwārīn, at which the patriarch himself, Gregory, was to be present. And this makes possible two further observations. The plot, and its details, must have been hatched principally in Oriens by Gregory, who knew Muḍīr well and how to ensnare him, although the orders naturally must have come from Constantinople.⁶³ And it indirectly testifies to the deep involvement of the Ghassānid king in ecclesiastical affairs. The prospect of attending a church consecration must have appealed to him, and his enemies knew it.⁶⁴ The "Muḍīr Affair" is an outstanding example of the interrelation of politics and religion in the history of the Christian Roman Empire.

⁶⁰ That is, when Justin II was not functioning as an emperor, having been declared insane. Thus it was Tiberius who received Muḍīr after a three-year estrangement from Byzantium. The scene in which Tiberius appears very embarrassed by the treachery of his senior imperial colleague is well described by Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 344. Although the passage is possibly conflated and may contain elements that pertain to the second reception of Muḍīr in 580, others are sound and authentic for the earlier meeting in the mid 570s; such is the statement "Tiberius en apprenant cela demeura stupéfait et loua Dieu qui avait déjoué l'ambûche de Justinus"; *ibid.*, lines 18–19.

⁶¹ See *BASIC* I.1, 448–50, 461–63.

⁶² See *ibid.*, 346–56.

⁶³ For details of this plot, see *ibid.*, 457–61.

⁶⁴ Already noted by Stein and, after him, Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1214). One could wonder how the church at Ḥuwwārīn was dedicated after this piece of treachery. For the church, which apparently has survived, but in ruins, see *BASIC* I.1, 458 note 183.

XIV

The Reign of Maurice (582–602)

I. INTRODUCTION

The sources that have been informative on the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids during the reign of Justin II and Tiberius, which coincided with that of Muḏīr, are not so for the long reign of Maurice, which lasted twenty years. This is primarily due to the death of the chief historian of the Ghassānids, John of Ephesus, in 585/86 and the fact that his account of the Ghassānids ends with the disestablishment of this phylarchate after the arrest and exile of Muḏīr in 581/82. However, the later Syriac sources, Michael the Syrian in particular, have preserved some data out of which the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids during the reign of Maurice can be reconstructed. Two distinct phases of this history can easily be detected: the first, which extended from 582 to 587, the period of interregnum, after Byzantium had disestablished the Ghassānid phylarchate and most probably depended on non-Ghassānid federates for its *foederati* in Oriens; the second, which may be said to have opened in 587, when the Ghassānids suddenly reappear as the dominant federate group; they continue as such until the end of the reign and indeed until the Muslim Conquest of Oriens.

II. THE CHALCEDONIAN ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THE GHASSĀNIDS

The first phase witnessed an attempt on the part of Byzantium to impose Dyophysitism on the Ghassānids or at least to win them over to it. A previous chapter has described the political situation that obtained during this period, which may be briefly stated. After news of the Ghassānid revolt, led by Muḏīr's son Nu'mān, reached Constantinople, Tiberius sent Magnus to try to restore the situation and install one of the brothers of Muḏīr, who was acceptable to Tiberius, as king and commandant of the Ghassānids. This member of the Ghassānid royal house did not last long but died shortly after he was installed. Who his successor as commander of the federate troops was is not clear, but non-Ghassānid phylarchs suddenly appear fighting with the Byzantine army against the Persians, and their names, Ḥujr and Ḍuj'um, suggest that at least one of them, Ḍuj'um, belonged to the *foederati* of the fifth century whom the Ghassānids replaced, namely, the Salīhids.

How Byzantium tried to win over the Ghassānids to the Dyophysite fold in this phase may be reconstructed as follows. The new Ghassānid king, with whom Tiberius chose to replace Munḍir, could easily have been a Dyophysite doctrinally. In fact if he had been otherwise, his appointment would have been unintelligible. This could be supported by the fact that the Syriac manuscript, analyzed in an earlier chapter, does speak of members of the Ghassānid royal house as Dyophysites, and they were uncles of Munḍir. So Byzantium could count on certain Ghassānids to rule as Dyophysite phylarchs and hopefully to sway the mass of the Ghassānid troops with them. Apparently, this did not work, since the new king died shortly after his installation.¹

The appearance of the non-Ghassānid phylarchs Ḥujr and Ḍujʿum in military operations conducted against the Persians, to the exclusion of the Ghassānids, in 586 suggests that Byzantium was now relying on its old federates, the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively, rather than on the Ghassānids. Those had, of course, persisted in the phylarchal federate structure of Oriens, although they had lost their dominant status. What is more, they were not Monophysites but orthodox. However, as has been pointed out in a previous chapter, Byzantium's attempt to give prominence to these did not work, and it was forced to reestablish the Ghassānids again, who appear in 587 in control of the federates in Oriens.

The most explicit reference in the sources to the attempt of the imperial government to convert the Ghassānids to Dyophysitism comes in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, when he gave an account of the encounter between Maurice and Nuʿmān, Munḍir's son, in Constantinople, after the latter desperately agreed to travel there to free his father who was under house arrest in the capital or in exile in Sicily. The passage in the *Chronicle* of Michael was discussed earlier in this volume in a different context, but it deserves to be analyzed here for its great relevance to ecclesiastical history. Michael relates that after the death of Magnus, Nuʿmān went to Constantinople where he was received by Maurice, who promised to return his father from exile if Nuʿmān agreed to fight the Persians. Nuʿmān was also approached to convert to Dyophysitism but refused, saying that if he did the Arab tribes would kill him. He left the capital angry, but on his way back to Oriens, he was arrested:

Magnus, homme scélérat et très méchant, mourut ensuite. Alors Naʿman prit sur lui-même de monter trouver le César Mauricianus. Celui-ci l'accueillit et lui jura que s'il combattait contre les Perses, il délivrerait son père de l'exil.

On dit à Naʿman de communiquer avec les Synodites. Il s'y refusa en disant: "Toutes les tribus des Ṭaiyayê sont orthodoxes; et si je com-

¹ On all this, see *BASIC* I.1, 471-75.

munique avec les Synodites, ils me tueront." A cause de cela, sa haine s'accrut, et, en partant, Na'man jura qu'il ne verrait plus volontairement le visage des Romains. C'est pourquoi, tandis qu'il était en route, on s'empara de lui et on l'envoya en exil, avec Mondar son père.²

The quotation from Michael the Syrian clearly indicates the predicament of the Ghassānid rulers and their inextricable involvement in Monophysitism. Maurice's request reveals him as a truly Chalcedonian ruler who wanted to see doctrinal uniformity in his realm. This express request in behalf of Dyophysitism supports the view that his hostility toward Nu'mān's father, Muḍir, was not exclusively grounded in professional rivalry about the conduct of the campaign against Ctesiphon; it was also doctrinally inspired.

Noteworthy is Nu'mān's reply that the Arabs, no doubt the federate Arabs, explicitly the Ghassānids, are all "orthodox," that is, Monophysites, and that if he converted they would kill him. This is the second reference to the Ghassānid armies as zealous Monophysites, after Arethas' reference to them around 570, when the Ghassānid king presided over the conference that tried the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon. Not only were they confirmed in their Monophysitism, but they would also go the length of killing their ruler if he deviated from the path of doctrinal correctness. Even if this was an exaggeration or an elegant way out of the embarrassing imperial invitation to convert, the essence of the statement is roughly true.

This was the situation in this period. With the Ghassānids in total or at least partial eclipse, the cause of Monophysitism among the federates, many of whom were non-Monophysites such as the Salīḥids and the Tanūkhids, must have been in disarray, commensurately with the disarray in the secular Ghassānid camp. Whether a Ghassānid bishop existed at this time is not known. If he did, he could not have had a prominent role in the fortunes of the Monophysite church as previous Ghassānid bishops, such as Theodore, had. He may even have lived in the countryside, maintaining a very attenuated presence at a time when his secular protectors were being hunted or frowned upon by the central government.

It is not inappropriate to refer in this connection to the fortunes of Arab Monophysitism across the borders in Persian Mesopotamia. Aḥūdemmeḥ, the apostle of the Arabs, had been active there for some two decades and had succeeded in establishing a strong Monophysite presence among the inhabitants of Bēth-ʿArabāyē, the Arabia of Xenophon and the classical historians, in Persian territory. Although Aḥūdemmeḥ, as a result of his zeal for proselytizing, met with a violent death as a martyr, he left behind him a viable Monophysite Arab church in Persian Mesopotamia, and it was thither that some of

² *Chronique*, II, 351.

the rebellious Ghassānid phylarchs during the interregnum fled and found refuge among fellow Arabs who shared with them the same doctrinal persuasion.³ As has been argued in a previous chapter, one of these phylarchs may well have been none other than Jafna, who appears in the next phase of the reign of Maurice as the chief figure of the restored Ghassānid phylarchate in 587.

III. THE ROLE OF THE GHASSĀNIDS IN INTER-MONOPHYSITE CONTROVERSIES: DAMIAN OF ALEXANDRIA AND PETER OF CALLINICUM

After a five-year absence from Monophysite ecclesiastical affairs in Oriens, the Ghassānids suddenly appear with a vengeance in 587. A Syriac source attests this restored Ghassānid presence in connection with the theological controversy that erupted within the Monophysite church between its two leading hierarchs, Damian, patriarch of Alexandria, and Peter of Callinicum, patriarch of Antioch. The account of the Syriac sources has been analyzed by scholars of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, such as J. Maspero and C. D. G. Müller.⁴ But the role played by the Ghassānids in this controversy remains to be analyzed and discussed in detail for the bright light it sheds on the restored Ghassānid phylarchate and its contribution to ecclesiastical history.⁵

This precious account of the Ghassānid involvement in the ecclesiastical history of the period comes in a letter that Peter of Callinicum wrote to his Syrian compatriots who lived in Alexandria, in which he describes his encounter with Damian in both Egypt and Oriens. In order to understand the role of the Ghassānids, it is necessary to give a resumé of the encounter, physical and theological, between the two patriarchs.

With the death of Jacob Baradaeus in 578 and that of Paul in 581, the Jacobite-Paulite strife most probably would have ended, but, as already noted, the domineering patriarch Damian of Alexandria revived the controversy and renewed the tension. There was a clash of egos and personalities, between Damian of Alexandria and Peter of Callinicum, and it developed into a regional struggle between Egypt and Oriens, represented by their respective patriarchs. The controversy was in a sense a legacy of that Monophysite heresy which was quashed in 570 at the conference of Constantinople, the Tritheism of Eugenius and Conon. Damian's efforts to reach an acceptable compromise

³ On Aḥūdemmeh and the Arabs of Mesopotamia, see *BAFOC*, 419–22. On the possibility that some Ghassānid phylarchs defected to them, see *BASIC* I.1, 548.

⁴ Only J. Maspero and recently C. D. G. Müller have discussed this source in detail, respectively in *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1923), 312–16, and "Damian, Papst und Patriarch von Alexandrien," *OC* 70 (1986), 131–35. In spite of some inaccuracies, the older work of Maspero has not outlived its usefulness.

⁵ The secular dimension of the account in the Syriac sources has been analyzed in a previous chapter; see *BASIC* I.1, 554–56.

between the orthodoxy preached by Severus of Antioch and the many Monophysite sects and heresies in Egypt led him almost to embrace Tritheism.⁶ The opposition to Damian's views came from the cleric whom Damian had consecrated in 581, Peter of Callinicum, who first protested and then wrote an extensive treatise against Damian's.⁷

The physical encounter between the two patriarchs is described in a letter of Peter of Callinicum which tells of his unsuccessful attempts to meet with Damian in Egypt and of attempts to meet in the Provincia Arabia in Oriens, but which also failed even after Damian and his party traveled there. Tentative meetings that were held turned out to be tumultuous and bloody, and thus the controversy was not resolved.

The texts of these encounters are to be found in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian: (a) the general account of Michael himself in which he briefly describes these encounters and explains how the theological controversy between the two came about; and (b) the letter that Peter wrote to his compatriots in Alexandria on this problem, describing the physical encounters between him and his party with Damian and his party, in Egypt and in Oriens.⁸

Michael's own account has no great value compared to Peter's letter, a primary source of the first importance. It is, of course, tendentious since Peter is not impartial in describing what happened, but generally speaking it is reliable even in its picture of Damian. Whatever the truth about that, the data he provides on the Ghassānids are not open to doubt since they are pedestrian, and no motive for falsification can be suspected. These references to the Ghassānids will therefore be extracted from the letter and assembled for a detailed analysis. But as the letter is involved in its description of the various phases of the encounter, some brief account of the background for each paragraph that pertains to the Ghassānids becomes necessary. The paragraphs that refer to them may be divided into two parts: (1) the first part, in which

⁶ Or so his antagonists claimed, who accused his partisans of being Tetradites, while the partisans of Damian charged those of Peter with Sabellianism.

⁷ Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, IV, 493.

⁸ See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 364–71. These texts are arranged in the *Chronique* in an awkward manner, not easy to follow. Michael's own account is in the left column and runs from p. 364 to the middle of p. 367. The letter of Peter runs from the middle of p. 367 to the end of p. 370, also in the left column. The letter is then continued in the right column from p. 364 to p. 370 and continues on the full p. 371. Chabot has footnotes for the guidance of the reader (p. 364 note 8 and p. 370 note 2). On p. 371 Michael has what Chabot calls a "note marginale," in which he says that the letter of Peter of Callinicum which he has included in his *Chronique* is taken from Dionysius of Tell Mahre, where it may be found in its entirety. The letter, then, as preserved in the *Chronique* of Michael, is not complete since Michael included only extracts from it to illustrate the cause of the difficulties that arose between the Egyptians and the Syrians.

the reference is implied; and (2) the second part, in which the Ghassānids, through their phylarch Jafna, are explicitly referred to.

The Letter of Peter of Callinicum

1

The most valuable part of this letter is that which describes the scene in which Peter and his party meet with the party of Damian, which had been sent in advance by the latter to negotiate concerning the place where Damian and Peter might meet and where they could agree on where to meet for the formal discussion. During the meeting, Peter suggests the Provincia Arabia as the rendezvous for fear of the Byzantine authorities. Damian's party suggests Antioch, but Peter counters by saying that this is not safe since the patriarch of that see never dared to set foot in it.⁹ Then both agree on Arabia. In Chabot's French translation, the dialogue between Peter and Damian's party reads as follows.

“Pour moi, je pense que l'Arabie est un lieu convenable pour l'assemblée, à cause de la crainte de ceux qui gouvernent.” Ceux-ci répondirent: “A Antioche”. Plusieurs en entendant cela les blâmèrent; car depuis que nous avons été établi dans ce ministère redoutable, sans en être digne, nous n'avons pu, de tout ce temps assez long, approcher de la ville. Ceux-ci s'engagèrent alors formellement (en disant): “Nous irons près du pape en Arabie”. Et (moi je dis): “J'irai avec vous où vous voudrez”.¹⁰

The passage is not only informative on the importance of the Provincia Arabia to the Monophysites but also for the Monophysite patriarchate of Peter, as *extra muros*; throughout his incumbency, he could not set foot in Antioch, where lived the rabid, anti-Monophysite and redoubtable Gregory. More important is the choice of the Provincia Arabia and the reason for it. This was the headquarters of the Ghassānid dynasty, the powerful and zealous protector of Monophysitism in Oriens. The astounding number of Monophysite monasteries that existed in the Provincia testify to the strong Monophysite persuasion of Arabia. Peter was aware of this, since he lived in Oriens, in the area of Ghassānid dominance and prestige, and thus was aware of the support the dynasty had given to Monophysitism. As to Antioch, he himself, the patriarch of that city, had to be content for a patriarchal residence with the monastery of Gubbā Barrāyā, for fear of Chalcedonian seculars and ecclesiastics; hence the explicit statement in his rejection of Antioch as the rendezvous and the choice of Arabia.

⁹ According to Michael the Syrian, this preparatory meeting took place in Paralos, Egypt; see *Chronique*, II, 366.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, left column, p. 370, lines 13–26.

There was another reason why Peter wanted the meeting to take place in the Provincia. This becomes apparent in the second part of the letter, which is more expansive on the role of the Ghassānids than the first. The chief Ghassānid phylarch, Jafna, was expected to attend the meeting of the two parties, so the Provincia would have been the most convenient region for his presiding over a Monophysite meeting. It was the headquarters of his dynasty, where he was all-powerful and influential and where no one could molest the Monophysite clerics meeting under his patronage. The Provincia had been the scene of a similar meeting, that of the archimandrites of Arabia in 570, who condemned the Tritheism of Eugenius and Conon and who met most probably under the patronage of the Ghassānid king Muḍir. This was a precedent, and Damian's and Peter's parties were thus meeting in the traditional location for such a Monophysite gathering under Ghassānid patronage.

This raises the question of the relationship of Peter to Jafna, the Ghassānid phylarch. Since Damian had emerged as the ranking and leading Monophysite hierarch in both Egypt and Oriens, Peter, who already had reservations about him and thought he was veering toward heresy, may have wanted to strengthen his own position vis-à-vis the powerful and domineering Damian. The best way of achieving that goal was no doubt the resuscitation of the role of the Ghassānid dynasty in the arbitration of ecclesiastical disputes, a role played by Arethas and Muḍir. But the Ghassānid dynasty stood behind the see of Antioch, in Oriens, the area of operation for the Ghassānids; hence this alliance between the Ghassānid phylarchate and the Monophysite patriarchate, and Peter's understandable desire to have present the prestigious Ghassānid phylarch as arbitrator.

What of the Ghassānid episcopate, especially after its eclipse, or seeming eclipse, in the preceding five years? No doubt it was in the best interest of the patriarchate of Peter to revive it as an influential episcopate and restore it to the power it had wielded during the incumbency of Theodore. The extant sources are silent on it, but it is possible that one of the two bishops¹¹ that Peter sent to meet the party of Damian may have been the Ghassānid bishop. This would have been an appropriate choice since he was the bishop of the powerful phylarch who would side with Peter in the prospective meeting and the bishop of the dynasty that would host it.

2

Finally, after much maneuvering by both parties, especially that of Damian, the patriarchs met in a monastery, whose name and location are not clear. It was, generally speaking, in the Provincia Arabia or adjoining areas,

¹¹ Ibid., p. 368, lines 19–21, left column.

possibly in Damascene. The letter uses such vague terms as *voisinage* and that the monastery was at a distance from the village, but which village in Arabia or in its vicinity is not clear.¹² The party of Damian had come from Tyre, and Peter was on his way from the north, from Euphratesia where Gubbā Barrāyā was located. The letter speaks of how Damian and his party wanted to know first who the participants in the colloquium would be and then the place where it would take place. Peter was more interested in the latter, and he suggested Gubbā Barrāyā, his own residence, which Damian rejected on the ground that it was "distant and barbaric."¹³ He gave Peter the impression that

¹² For the French terms *voisinage* and *village*, see *Chronique*, p. 365, lines 6–7, 9–10, right column. For the Syriac terms, see *ibid.*, p. 382, lines 5 and 7, right column.

The account is lacking in topographical and toponymical precision. What *voisinage* ("proximity, vicinity, neighborhood") really means is not clear since no toponym has been mentioned to which the term could be related, unless Arabia, the *provincia*, is meant, which is mentioned a few lines before (p. 365, line 1), which Peter says he reached. Since he was coming from the north, from Gubbā Barrāyā in Euphratesia, this province adjacent to Arabia from the north and on his way could be Phoenicia Libanensis, and that part of it closest to Arabia is Damascene. The term *village* is equally vague since the name of the village is not given. This could raise the suspicion that the Syriac term might be read not *qrīta*, "village" in the singular, but *qeryāta* in the plural, which it can be, since the text is not vocalized. This could be a proper noun, the name of a well-known village in the region, *al-qurayyāt*, "the villages," associated with the Ghassānids and known to the contemporary poet Ḥassān, who lauded them. This would also be in Damascene. It is therefore just possible that the two patriarchs met in a monastery outside this particular town or village, Qurayyāt, in Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis, on which would have converged Damian, coming from Phoenicia Maritima to Libanensis, and Peter, coming from Euphratesia. On *qurayyāt*, see the *Dīwān of Ḥassān*, I, p. 255, verse 2. The toponym does not appear in Yāqūt nor Bakrī.

On the other hand, the difficulty may be negated by realizing that the letter is not complete; Michael the Syrian included only extracts from it (above, note 8). The name of the village may have been mentioned previously, in one of the paragraphs that Michael did not extract and include in the letter as it appears in his *Chronique*. This is the more likely solution.

¹³ There has been some confusion on the location of Gubbā Barrāyā. Maspero (*Histoire*, 313 note 1) thought it was in Arabia Petraea, citing Ptolemy, and so did others, such as Nau, *Le christianisme*, 90. But this identification is completely out of the question. The two parties had settled and agreed on meeting in the Provincia Arabia, but Petraea was then a part of Palaestina Tertia, having been separated from Arabia long before; see G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 143. And Petraea would have been a most unlikely place for the colloquium, being so far out of the way of the two patriarchs who had already met in the Provincia Arabia and were soon to meet in Gabīta, in the same *provincia*.

As to its correct location, it should be sought exactly where the letter places it, in the Euphrates region, near what the letter enumerates—Hierapolis (Manbij), Beroea (Aleppo), and Antioch (*Chronique*, II, 366, lines 1–5, right column). So it is either in Syria Prima or Euphratesia. This too was far from where the two patriarchs had met, but at least a reason was given for its consideration as convenient for the colloquium, namely, that this was Monophysite territory, and Gubbā Barrāyā was the see of the patriarch of Antioch. It may be difficult to pin down exactly where in that region Gubbā Barrāyā was, but this is a matter of detail; most probably it was between Doliche and Cyrrhus. It is strange that Maspero should have chosen to locate it in Petraea in spite of what the letter, a primary document, says, and he does cite the letter by referring to Michael's *Chronique*, II, 366. See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 205. Müller

he was not interested in a real discussion during the colloquium but preferred an epistolary correspondence in order to wriggle out from certain difficulties his theological position had led him into. Having described this impasse, Peter begins to mention the role of the Ghassānids in a series of paragraphs that will be presented in sequence below.

A

The first paragraph states that it was decided to wait for the arrival of Jafna and do what he thought fit: "A la fin, il leur plut d'attendre le venue de l'illustre Gôphna, qui était à Mabboug, pour faire ce qu'il prescrirait et tenir discussion où il voudrait."¹⁴ The arrival of Jafna clearly implies that there had been a previous correspondence between him and Peter concerning his attendance at the conference.

It is noteworthy that he was coming from Manbij (Mabbough, Hierapolis) in distant Euphratesia. This implies that the Ghassānid phylarch, a soldier, was still a concerned Monophysite who would travel that distance in order to attend an ecclesiastical synod. Perhaps this may be related to the fact that this was his first year in office as phylarch. After a *quinquennium* of invisibility (possibly in Persia) following the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate of Mundir in 582, the newly appointed phylarch of the Ghassānids may have thought it conducive to the restoration of his prestige to assume the role of arbitrator between warring Monophysite parties, the role that Mundir and Arethas before him had played. The prestige of the Ghassānid phylarch is fully indicated in the statement of complete surrender to his wishes. The two parties awaited his arrival and his orders on what to do and where to meet.¹⁵

B

The meeting at the monastery was tumultuous. The letter states that most of those who attended knew that truth did not reside in the position taken by Damian, and the party of Peter was unable to suppress the agitation that Damian's party had created. It was in this atmosphere and at this juncture that Jafna arrived on Monday of Holy Week. Peter then suggested to Damian that he and Damian appear before Jafna so that the phylarch might suggest a convenient place for the colloquium, or that each party send three representatives to the phylarch for that purpose. But Damian rejected the suggestion and said that the selection of the representatives who would take

("Damian," 133–34) accepts its position in the north in the Euphrates region. Honigmann (*Évêques*, 205), who writes authoritatively on toponymy, accepts its general location in Euphratesia but adds that its exact site has not been determined.

¹⁴ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, p. 366, lines 27–30, right column.

¹⁵ On the honorific titles applied to Jafna, see *BASIC* I.1, 563.

part in the colloquium was more important than the decision on the location of the meeting, because, according to Peter, he had counted on some partisans from Tyre to arrive who would support him.

Gôphna étant arrivé le lundi de la Passion, nous fîmes dire (au pape) ou de se rendre avec nous près de lui, pour qu'il nous fixât un lieu convenable, ou d'envoyer trois personnes avec les nôtres. Mais le pape, comme s'il avait oublié ce qui s'était passé auparavant, répondit: "Nous ne parlerons pas du lieu avant d'avoir désigné les personnes". Il comptait sur quelques personnes de Tyr, qu'il avait séduites, pour venir à son aide.¹⁶

It is noteworthy that Jafna arrived on the Monday of Holy Week. This could not have been accidental. The presumption is that Peter wanted the meeting with the phylarch to coincide with a holy season in the ecclesiastical calendar, an appropriate time for a meeting to discuss christology. The two alternatives proposed by Peter to Damian again reflect Jafna's prestige: the patriarchs were to go to the phylarch, and not vice versa. Presumably Jafna stayed in a *praetorium* or a camp prepared for him not far from the monastery where the two patriarchs were staying.

C

When Peter received Damian's reply stating that he would rather decide on those who were to represent each party rather than on the place of rendezvous, he thought it just to proceed with a διαμαρτυρία against Damian. On being apprised of this, the Ghassānid phylarch became aware of Damian's bad intentions and started to blame himself for getting involved in their affair. Finally, pressed by Peter and the Ghassānid phylarch, the two parties agreed to meet in the church of St. Sergius at Gabīta (Jābiya).

Quand nous eûmes reçu leur réponse, et que nous eûmes vu leur perversité, nous crûmes juste d'user de protestation vis-à-vis de lui. Quand le phylarque apprit ces choses, il comprit leur mauvais vouloir. Il se rapprochait à lui-même de s'être engagé dans leur affaire.

Pressés par nous et par le glorieux phylarque, ils se réunirent avec nous pour la seconde fois dans le temple de Mar Sergius, à Gabīta.¹⁷

The use of the Greek legal term διαμαρτυρία raises the question of its exact meaning here. The term can mean either a legal appeal or a plea/petition for a case to be referred to a higher court, or a solemn statement or declaration. It is practically certain that it meant the former since it has been used in

¹⁶ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, p. 367, lines 1–12, right column.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, lines 13–24, right column.

the Syriac Monophysite sources for a legal appeal, and the following sentence supports the choice of this interpretation.¹⁸ Chabot's translation "vis-à-vis de lui" reproduces the ambiguity of the original Syriac *lwāteh*, where the antecedent of the pronominal suffix is not clear—Damian or Jafna, most probably Damian. In any case, the appeal rested in the hands of Jafna, both because he was there to arbitrate and because there was no higher ecclesiastical authority to whom to send an appeal of one patriarch against another. A Ghassānid predecessor of Jafna's had received such an appeal in the years 575–578, when he was trying to reconcile the Paulites and Jacobites.¹⁹ He handed it to Mār Antiochus, the mysterious ecclesiastic who was present at the court of Mundiṣ; and it was only right since only ecclesiastics could decide on the future of Paul. The case of the present appeal was different; it was procedural, not doctrinal, involving the meeting place of the two parties.

Apparently the prestige of the phylarch was such that after much wrangling the stubborn Damian finally agreed to meet with Peter and his party at the church of St. Sergius in Gabīta (Jābiya). It was only natural for Jafna to suggest Gabīta as the place where the colloquium should take place since it was the "capital" of the Ghassānids. The phylarch was a newly appointed one and had traveled a great distance in order to attend the meeting, thereby enhancing the prestige of the restored Ghassānid dynasty in Oriens within the Monophysite church as its protector. This role was clearly implied in Peter's previous request for a meeting in Arabia for security reasons in a hostile Dyophysite world. No site could have been better for the conference than the church of St. Sergius, one of the saints especially revered by the Monophysites. Thus, in the calculations of the Ghassānid phylarch, he could celebrate the inception of his phylarchate in Oriens not only by winning military victories on the Persian front but also by appearing in the role of his ancestors, as the protector of the Monophysite church of Oriens, and by enabling his "capital" to be the site of an unusual meeting that involved both Oriens and the two most active and powerful Monophysite communities in the world.

D

The meeting at the church of St. Sergius was not unlike the preceding one at the monastery. Peter describes in the letter how he tried to let himself and Damian carry on a dialogue on the issue without the tumult contributed by the party of Damian as well as his own. But he failed to impose silence, and Damian was not helpful in that endeavor. Even the phylarch and those

¹⁸ Translated *protestation* in Chabot's French version (lines 15–16). For its use previously in the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, see above, 880–81.

¹⁹ Above, 876–92.

with him failed to bring order to the meeting, and he understood that Damian's party, by its conduct, was concealing its leader's feeble argument. As the phylarch was anxious to go back to his troops, he gave the two parties some sort of ultimatum: either accept for the meeting a place determined by him, or let him depart. When Damian started to speak not of the place but of those to be chosen for participation, the phylarch replied that it was not meet that clerics be corrected by seculars like himself. When Damian refused to be persuaded by the phylarch and did not accept the note which he had written concerning the place, the phylarch was irritated and departed. The relevant part of the letter on this transaction reads as follows.

Le philarque et ses gens ne purent leur imposer silence, de sorte que le discours se prolongea (démésurément); ils comprirent qu'ils excitaient du trouble pour cacher sa faiblesse.

Le philarque avait hâte de retourner près de ses troupes. Il dit: "Vous plaît-il de vous rendre à l'endroit déterminé par nous? sinon, laissez-moi partir". Alors le pape chercha des prétextes au sujet des personnes. Le philarque répondit: "Il ne convient pas que vous soyez corrigés par nous autres séculiers". Comme le pape ne se laissa pas persuader et n'accepta pas le libelle qu'il avait écrit à propos du lieu, le philarque s'en alla irrité.²⁰

It is clear from the passage that Jafna had with him his own Ghassānid group who thus formed a third party at the meeting. There must have been some lesser phylarchs under his command, possibly some of his brothers or sons; familial ties were strong among the Ghassānids, as has been pointed out. It is not impossible that he had with him some Ghassānid clergy, chaplains assigned to the troops, and possibly the Ghassānid bishop—ecclesiastics who could advise him on the theological controversy he was supposed to listen to as arbitrator.

It is noteworthy that the Ghassānid phylarch was unable to reduce the tumultuous gathering to silence. This is striking since the Ghassānids had great prestige on such occasions. One of his ancestors, the redoubtable Arethas, had left a deep impression on the capital itself when he appeared there in 563. Jafna lacked no strong presence, and his failure to silence the tumult can therefore be an indication of the strength of Damian's personality, noted by those who have written about him. There is no better reflection of it than his refusal to be impressed by the presence of the powerful Ghassānid phylarch. On a previous occasion when he encountered the Ghassānids, he was overpowered by Mundir in Constantinople in 580, but then he had come as a refugee from Antioch and was given protection by Mundir.

²⁰ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, p. 368, lines 5–22, right column.

Jafna's reaction to Damian's refusal to accept the former's choice of a formal place for the meeting elicited from the phylarch the reply that he was not a cleric but a secular leader, and it was not meet that the secular should correct the spiritual. In this, he was acting in full conformity with the reverential attitude of the Ghassānid royal house toward their spiritual leaders, expressed in Arethas' letter to Jacob Baradaeus in 563.

The *libelle*,²¹ the written note composed by Jafna concerning the place for the formal meeting, seems to be the only positive thing that he accomplished. It is clear from the context that the *libelle* was written by the phylarch, and the presumption is that it was written in Greek, as were all the communications written by Arethas and Munḍir to the clerics of the Monophysite church.²² The letter does not specify which place Jafna had chosen, but it is likely to have been one of the residence towns or monasteries of the Ghassānids in Arabia, for both the security of the participants and the prestige of the dynasty.

After Damian rejected Jafna's suggestion of a place for the prospective meeting, the latter departed in a state of irritation. His irritation had been clear and was noted twice in the letter; his decision to depart was a soldier's decision. Although he did not preside over the formal meeting, he did participate and the meeting did take place in the Ghassānid residence town of Gabīta/Jābiya. Thus the Monophysite clerics did give prominence to the Ghassānid capital, which the dynasty needed after its five-year interregnum and lack of visibility in the military and ecclesiastical history of Oriens. Furthermore, the meeting was a very special one involving not merely the Monophysite groups of his diocese, Oriens, or the Patriarchate of Antioch, but the two principal Monophysite communities of the empire, those of Egypt and Oriens. The two met in the Ghassānid capital, thus giving it and the dynasty an international character and prominence that it had enjoyed some seven years before when Munḍir presided over the conference in Constantinople composed of communities from the same two regions and succeeded in reconciling them, although only for a short time.

The sudden departure of the phylarch after a long journey from Hierapolis, and away from the highest gathering of the Monophysite hierarchy in which both Egypt and Oriens participated, calls for an explanation; it sounds strange in spite of the irritations he experienced, as recorded in Peter's letter.²³ His departure admits of at least one or two explanations. Jafna was tempera-

²¹ The Syriac text uses the Greek term *πυλλάκιον*; *ibid.*, note 2.

²² On the use of Greek in the world of Oriens Christianus, see the perceptive observations of Müller in "Damian," 130–31.

²³ Whatever the explanation may turn out to be for the departure of the phylarch, it could not have been what Maspero (*Histoire*, 315) suggested. The Ghassānid phylarchate had by then been restored. Nor is there evidence that there was a difficult political situation that required his presence with his troops; Müller, "Damian," p. 134.

mentally such as not to brook opposition or nonsense; he was a soldier, and perhaps military necessities on the Persian front required his presence. On the other hand, it is possible to detect in his departure a note of dissatisfaction with the Monophysite hierarchy and with ecclesiastical politics. Only five years before, Monophysite bickering had contributed to the downfall of the illustrious Ghassānid king Muḍīr. The two patriarchs whom Jafna faced at Gabīta had not served the Ghassānid cause well. Damian had betrayed Muḍīr on his return to Egypt after the conference of Constantinople in 580, and had continued to annoy the Ghassānid king after his betrayal. This behavior continued after Peter had been consecrated patriarch while Paul (the true patriarch of Antioch) was still alive, and Paul had been supported by Jafna's Ghassānid predecessors, Arethas and Muḍīr. It is, therefore, possible that Jafna remembered all this. So while he remained a faithful Monophysite, he seems to have had some reservations about the two clerics and, what is more, about being too involved in ecclesiastical controversies that had contributed to the downfall of the dynasty a few years before.

Peter's letter has succeeded in giving a vivid picture of the newly appointed Ghassānid phylarch, just as John of Ephesus and other sources had done for Muḍīr and Arethas. The almost complete aridity of the Greek and Syriac sources on the Ghassānids in this period, during the reign of Maurice and after the fall of Muḍīr, has made of this letter a veritable oasis.²⁴ It has established the return of the Ghassānids not only to the imperial fold as phylarchs but also to the Monophysite church and, what is more, as its patrons.

Jafna left Gabīta for Hierapolis after having failed to bring about a reconciliation of the two churches of Egypt and Oriens. The controversy and breach remained alive even after the deaths of the two antagonists, Peter in 591 after a tenure of the Antiochene see for ten years and Damian in 606. The estrangement persisted until 616 when it was another soldier, Nicetas, the cousin of Emperor Heraclius, that reestablished the reconciliation of the two communities, the Syrian and the Egyptian, represented by their two respective patriarchs, Athanasius and Anastasius.²⁵

IV. POPE GREGORY AND THE PROVINCIA ARABIA: THE GHASSĀNID PROFILE

After two Ghassānids, Nuḥmān and Jafna, crossed the paths of Maurice and two patriarchs in the 580s, a third phylarch, the exiled king Muḍīr, crossed (at least in correspondence) the path of Pope Gregory. A previous chapter has

²⁴ Completely unknown to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids, since the Syriac version of Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle* had not yet been discovered.

²⁵ The main source is Michael the Syrian, on whom David Olster drew in his competent article, "Chalcedonian and Monophysite: The Union of 616," *Bulletin of the Society for Coptic Archaeology* 27 (Cairo, 1985), 93-108.

analyzed the letter that the pope wrote to Maurice in July 600 in behalf of the exiled Ghassānid king in Sicily.²⁶ Eight months after, in February 601, the pope wrote a letter to Marianus, one of the bishops of the Provincia Arabia, Mundir's province. The bishop had sent one of his clergy, an abbot named Candidus, to Rome in order to ask the pope for holy relics to be brought thence to the Provincia. In his reply, the pope refers to Candidus to whom he gave the requested relics, and which he mentions in the first short sentence. The rest of the letter is devoted to an extended apology for Gregory's inability to see the abbot in person owing to the pope's ill health.

The letter to Marianus, bishop in Arabia, has been analyzed by Pierre-Louis Gatier who argued well that Marianus was not the bishop of Bostra, the metropolitan bishop of Arabia, but of Gerasa, a city of the Decapolis; that the bishop was an orthodox Chalcedonian bishop; and that the relics sent pertained to Sts. Peter and Paul. He related all this to the building of a church in Gerasa dedicated to the two Apostles by Anastasius, Marianus' successor.²⁷

The pope's letter raises some important questions. Pope Gregory is known to have sent relics to the Orient, but these were to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch,²⁸ not to a relatively unimportant town such as Gerasa. The relics of the two saints could not have been plentiful in Rome, and so they were precious and of special value to the bishop of Rome who claimed primacy among the pontiffs of Christendom based on what Christ said to Peter, "Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my church." Furthermore, the letter is unduly long in apologies on the part of the pope for his inability to see the envoy of this Arabian bishop. All this suggests that the pope had a special interest in the Arabian bishop, the roots of which deserve to be probed.

Pope Gregory was naturally a staunch upholder of orthodoxy since he sat on the same cathedra as the very pope who issued the famous Tome for those assembled at Chalcedon. This strict orthodoxy which he both upheld and wanted to enforce is reflected in his letter to the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, Eulogius, whose synodal letter he criticized in detail on doctrinal grounds with pointed references to the Monophysites and their theologians,

²⁶ See *BASIC* I.1, 602-5.

²⁷ See P. L. Gatier, "Une lettre du Pape Grégoire le grand à Marianus évêque de Gerasa," *Syria* 64 (1987), 131-35. For the Latin text of the letter and its French translation, see *ibid.*, 132-33.

²⁸ Pope Gregory stood for the primacy of the Roman see over the other patriarchates of the Orient, and so sending the incumbents of two of these patriarchates relics of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, would have carried a message reminding them that Rome was the city where the two great Apostles were martyred. It is pertinent to remark that Pope Gregory supported the tradition that Paul was martyred in Rome on the left bank of the Tiber. On the relics sent by the pope to the two patriarchs, see Fliche and Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, V (Paris, 1947), 61.

Eutyches, Dioscorus, and Severus.²⁹ And, as is well known, he stood for the primacy of the Roman see and objected to the Constantinopolitan patriarchs' use of the title "ecumenical patriarch."

His letter to Eulogius was written some ten years before his letter to Marianus. But now his letter on behalf of Munḍir must have revived his interest in Monophysitism, to him a heresy. Munḍir was the military protector of the movement; and the pope, as has been argued,³⁰ was in Constantinople as an *apocrisiarius* of Pope Pelagius II in 579. He was thus aware of the Monophysite problem that faced Tiberius in 580 when he assembled its clerics in Constantinople, whom Munḍir reconciled. He knew, therefore, much about the Ghassānids and their chief province, Arabia, in Oriens.

The letter of Marianus to the pope has not survived, but it is easy to imagine its contents. This was the bishop of a province that had a very strong Monophysite complexion, reflected in the vast number of monasteries that were to be found in it, in addition to the protective shield of the Ghassānids and their strong military presence in the Provincia.

Not only Severan Monophysitism but also the Julianist version of it, even more unacceptable to the pope's orthodox Christianity, tried to establish a presence in the Provincia Arabia. Slightly after 549 a Julianist bishop, Eutropius, consecrated ten bishops and sent them in various directions to spread the faith. One of them, Theodosius, was apparently assigned to the Provincia Arabia, but he died crushed in a house destroyed by an earthquake. Another bishop, Stephen, was consecrated in his place.³¹ Later on, in 584, the Julianists made an attempt to consecrate bishops for the sees of Edessa and Bostra. The second of the two was assigned to George Bar-Abshai who, like his Severan counterpart, never lived there and was only bishop *extra muros*, and that for only a few days.³²

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *BASIC* I.1, 604.

³¹ For this see R. Draguet, "Pièces de polémique antijulianiste," *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), 84, where a Syriac anti-Julianist document is given in French translation.

³² See Draguet, "Polémique," p. 78, line 6, where Buṣrā/Bostra is clearly written. Draguet erroneously thought it was Baṣra/Bassora in Iraq (ibid., 86), a mistake noted by Honigmann, *Évêques*, 160 note 6. The consecration of the two bishops, George and Daniel, did not last long since they were deposed by those who consecrated them a few days after on the ground of non-canoncity. They were consecrated in September and deposed in October 584; see Draguet, "Polémique," 62.

This consecration, ephemeral as it was, is of some importance in the history of Monophysitism in the 6th century: (a) it was done during the *quinquennium* of eclipse for the Ghassānids; and so the Julianists were encouraged to consecrate the two bishops when the protectors of Severan Monophysitism were not on hand to threaten them; (b) the consecration of the two bishops for Edessa and Bostra confirms that the previous Severan one of ca. 540 involving Jacob and Theodore for the same two cities cannot be viewed with doubt; (c) Stephen, who was consecrated bishop for Arabia after Theodosius, appears as the one from whom proceeded or derived the Julianist hierarchy; Draguet, "Polémique," 61–62.

Such was the image of the Provincia in the perception of the orthodox pope: *Arabia haeresium ferax*, Arabia the breeding ground of heresies. Thus it was from the time of Origen to the sixth century, when Monophysitism became rampant in it, in both its Severan and Julianist versions, and where the most towering monument of its religious architecture was the Cathedral of Bostra, dedicated to what had become a Monophysite saint, Sergius, and consecrated in an impressive ceremony in 513 in which participated Severus himself and Philoxenus of Mabboug.

Important in this connection is the question of relics in Oriens, which were the main burden of Marianus' letter to the pope, surely a striking request from a small provincial town such as Gerasa to the bishop of Rome—relics of the two Roman martyrs! The sixth century witnessed those extraordinary events in South Arabia, the martyrdoms in Najrān, in which a number of Christians laid down their lives rather than renounce their faith, and that within the orbit of Byzantine influence and some two centuries after the Peace of the Church. But these martyrs were Monophysites; hence the Monophysite church could boast of an abundance of relics available for the dedication of its churches in Arabia and in the Fertile Crescent. This was especially true in Byzantine Oriens where the Ghassānids, related to these South Arabian martyrs by consanguinity and confession, must have been promoters of their cult.³³ Their headquarters were in the Provincia Arabia, where Gerasa was located.

In view of these facts, it is not extravagant to assume that the Chalcedonian bishop of Gerasa wrote to the Chalcedonian pope for relics which would be a counterpoise to the spread of Monophysitism in his province, promoted by the abundance of relics of Monophysite saints. As bishop of Gerasa, he might have thought it a *coup* to write to Rome itself, the see of the most distinguished of the ecclesiastics of Christendom, invoking his aid for relics of the foremost saints and martyrs of Christianity, Peter and Paul, for the erection of a Chalcedonian church dedicated to them. The pope, stimulated by his intercession in behalf of Monophysite Mundīr eight months before, most probably was in a receptive mood for such a request on the part of Marianus. He probably thought that this would strengthen the cause of Dyophysitism in that important province, so close to the Holy Land in which he had a special interest.

³³ On this and on Najrān in the Provincia Arabia, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 78–80.

XV

The Reign of Phocas (602–610)

The Syriac sources, the only sources that record the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids, are silent on their involvement in church affairs after the reign of Maurice. With the departure of the phylarch Jafna, irritated from the conference at Jābiya in 587 by inter-Monophysite bickering, the Ghassānids also make their exit from the Syriac sources for the pre-Islamic period. This is especially true of the reigns of both Phocas and Heraclius, and the student of these two reigns is reduced to catching echoes of such involvement which come indirectly from related and circumstantial data.

I. THE RETURN OF MUNDIR FROM SICILY

The most important fact in the life of the Ghassānids was the return of their king Muḍir from exile in Sicily where he had languished throughout the whole of the reign of Maurice. The Ghassānids thus celebrated the inception of the reign with the return of their king. A previous chapter has examined the problems related to that return.¹ Was it a purely secular operation, involving the new emperor who supplanted Maurice and naturally tried to undo his work including the exile of the Ghassānid king, or was it again Pope Gregory whose mediation this time was successful? In either case, the return has implications for the Ghassānids in their relations to both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*. Phocas was an avowed Chalcedonian; so the question arises whether the price of the return of the Monophysite king was Ghassānid concessions concerning their support of the Monophysite movement, as Maurice himself had requested from Nu'mān as the price for the return of his father.²

II. GHASSĀNID MONOPHYSITISM DURING THE REIGN

There is no definite answer to this question. The possibility, or even probability, is that the Ghassānids in this period were no longer the zealous champions of Monophysitism. This is already noticeable in the attitude of the phylarch Jafna toward the two Monophysite parties of Peter, the patriarch of

¹ See *BASIC* I.1, 618–22.

² The actual request made by Maurice was Nu'mān's return to fight against the Persians, but that was immediately followed by a request to convert to the Chalcedonian position; see *BASIC* I.1, 529–32.

Antioch, and Damian, the patriarch of Alexandria. He did not think it worth his while to linger at Jābiya trying to reconcile the two warring parties. And it has been suggested that his attitude was governed by the fate of Muḍir, whose staunch support of Monophysitism brought him to grief.³ In 602 an embittered and broken-spirited Muḍir returned after twenty years of captivity and exile in a distant and foreign country, and his sudden appearance on the Ghassānid scene in Oriens must have reminded the Ghassānids, if they had forgotten, of the price they once paid for their support of Monophysitism, and what a thankless task this had proved to be.

The test must have come in 608/9, which witnessed one of the outbursts of Phocas, this time against the Monophysites of Oriens. The emperor's displeasure and determination to enforce strict orthodoxy and obedience to Chalcedon found expression in the dispatch of Bonosus and Cottanas, who brutally quelled the Monophysite uprising in Oriens.⁴

Ghassānid reaction to Bonosus' campaign against the Monophysites is not recorded, and there is no way of telling what form it took. If the Ghassānids were now lukewarm and not so zealous as before in their support of Monophysitism, they would have distanced themselves from active participation in the campaign as a negative contribution. There is no evidence that they withdrew from the service as they had done in 519 when Justin I instituted a severe persecution of the Monophysites. But whatever they might have done, they must have been pleased with the outcome of the struggle between Bonosus and Nicetas, the cousin of Heraclius,⁵ in Egypt, and the subsequent fall of Phocas that brought in another emperor, even more favorable to the Ghassānids than Phocas had been.

If the Syriac sources are silent on the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs during the reign of Phocas, the Greek sources are not. One Greek inscription, from Anasartha in Syria, speaks of a certain Gregorios Abimēnos, who dedicated a building to God in 604. Nothing is known about this personage, and a previous chapter has examined the possibility of his being a Ghassānid or a non-Monophysite Arab, such as the Tanūkhids were. And it was concluded that most probably he was neither but was a Rhomaic Arab.⁶ This is the one solitary voice of Arab Christianity that is explicitly recorded in the sources for the reign of Phocas.

The aridity of the sources, both Greek and Syriac, on Ghassānid ecclesiastical history during this reign is relieved by a truly exciting reference to the Ghassānid religious complexion in the Arabic sources. Although this will

³ See above, 933–35.

⁴ On Bonosus and Cottanas in Oriens, see *BASIC* I.1, 630–31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 635–37.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 628–30.

be analyzed intensively in *BASIC II*, it should be mentioned here. The reference is owed to the contemporary Arab poet Nābigha, who wrote panegyrics on the Ghassānid kings in the reigns of Maurice and Phocas. He refers to their religion as "straight." The Arabic adjective "straight" (*qawīm*,⁷ Greek ὀρθός) is as frustrating as it is tantalizing. It is not at all clear whether it is used in the Dyophysite or the Monophysite sense, since the followers of the latter confession invariably referred to themselves as orthodox, as they have done to the present day.

⁷ This term will be analyzed and discussed in detail in *BASIC II*. It occurs in one of the odes of Nābigha on the Ghassānid ʿAmr.

XVI

The Reign of Heraclius (610–641)

The possibility of writing the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids during the reign of Heraclius is slightly better than for the reign of Phocas. The reign was long, and Heraclius' policy toward Monophysitism is well documented. It emerges clearly from the sources as it is pursued from the very beginning of the reign till its end. Although the references to the Ghassānids are not plentiful, it is possible to set them against the ecclesiastical policy of the reign and interpret them accordingly. A previous chapter in this volume has treated the role of the Ghassānids in the military history of the reign and has indicated their whereabouts during its three decades; so it has set the stage for writing their ecclesiastical history, the main features of which become clear after a brief survey of the policy of Heraclius toward the Monophysites.

I. INTRODUCTION

The reign of Heraclius is not unlike that of Justinian in that one may follow the emperor's attitude toward solving the religious problem in his realm in all its stages.¹ Heraclius began his reign with an understanding of the importance of the problem posed by Monophysitism, in which he was involved even more than Justinian. The people he belonged to, the Armenians, formed one of the three main groups of Monophysites in the Byzantine East, the other two being those in Oriens and in Egypt. His father, the exarch of Africa, had recently come from the East where he had fought against the Persians, and he was naturally familiar with the problem as it presented itself during the reign of Maurice. Even before his departure from Carthage, Heraclius must have discussed with his father the problem of reconciling the Monophysites of the empire with its Chalcedonians.

His motives in so doing are all easily recognizable. While he himself sailed with the fleet against Phocas in Constantinople, his cousin Nicetas marched overland to Egypt and was to continue his march through Oriens.

¹ For the ecclesiastical policy of the reign of Heraclius, see the account of Frend, *Rise*, 344–52, and the extensive chapter in Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, I, 283–304, with its bibliography. The material presented there has been reorganized in the three following paragraphs; they treat Heraclius' comprehension of the problem, his motives in dealing with it, and the measures he took.

Thus he would be operating in territories in which the Monophysites were powerful, and he needed them for the success of his adventure against Phocas. Moreover, Phocas had alienated the Monophysites as recently as 609 when he instituted harsh measures against them and sent them Bonosus and Cottanas. Immediately after the fall of Phocas, both Heraclius and Nicetas had to fight the Persians in Oriens, also full of Monophysites. Furthermore, this was Ghassānid territory, and the contribution of these seasoned *foederati* would be invaluable in the war with the Persians. Almost a decade later, Heraclius would begin his counteroffensive against Persia in 622, and he begins it from Armenia itself, Monophysite to the hilt, where he recruited troops for his army.

It was then only natural that he should have engaged in a series of efforts throughout his reign in order to conciliate the Monophysites. The highlights of these endeavors were his conferences with their patriarchs and chief ecclesiastics. It was also his cousin, the Chalcedonian Nicetas, who effected the union of the two Monophysite churches of Egypt and Oriens in 616, when he brought the two patriarchs, Athanasius and Anastasius, together. Even after the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Muslim Arabs at Yarmūk, Heraclius issued the Ekthesis in 638. In all these endeavors, he had the support of his patriarch in Constantinople, Sergius, a Syrian himself,² who did most of the theological thinking behind these efforts at reconciliation with his Monoenergism and Monotheletism, with clever emphasis on *Monos* as a sop to the Monophysites.

Such an ecclesiastical policy could only have endeared the new emperor to the Ghassānids, especially after their experiences with the anti-Monophysite outburst of Phocas in 609/10. Even though they may have lost the edge of their enthusiasm for an uncompromising support of the confession after the exile of their king Mundir, they remained Monophysites until the very end of the Byzantine period, and most of them crossed over to Anatolia after the Muslim occupation of Oriens. Their history throughout the reign was that of support for Heraclius, first against Phocas and then against the Persians, and this has been treated in a previous chapter of this volume. With this support must have been coupled their approval of the emperor's friendly gestures toward Monophysitism to which they belonged.

The sources for the Ghassānids on ecclesiastical matters are even less informative than they are on their political and military contributions. Only echoes have survived that can be treated in an ecclesiastical context. Most of these come toward the end of the second decade of the reign, which is under-

² And, according to Michael the Syrian and Theophanes, of Monophysite parentage; see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 287, and Frend, *Rise*, 344. On Byzantine contacts with Theodore, the bishop of Phārān in Sinai, and the problems these contacts raise, see below, 983–84.

standable since, with the Persian occupation of Oriens for almost two decades, the Ghassānids were off with Heraclius in Anatolia. Even then there is only one echo which might be caught from the sources before their return to Oriens after the Persian evacuation of the region.

II. THE ARAB *FOEDERATI* IN A HERACLIAN VICTORY BULLETIN

On 15 May 628, the feast of Pentecost, the victory of Emperor Heraclius over Persia was announced from the ambo of St. Sophia. In that important historical document, there is an explicit reference to the services of the Arab/Saracen *foederati* to the Byzantine war effort against the Persians, which consisted of their dispatch,³ together with parts of their regular Byzantine troops, to find out what had happened between Chosroes Parviz and his son Seiroes: ἐκ τῶν εὐτυχεστάτων ἡμῶν ἐκστρατευμάτων καὶ ἐκ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν τῶν ὄντων ὑπὸ τὴν φιλόχριστον ἡμῶν πολιτείαν, διὰ τό, ὡς εἴρηται, γῶναι ἡμᾶς ἀκριβῶς τὰ ἐκεῖσε κινηθέντα.⁴ The military aspect of this reference has been commented upon in a previous chapter;⁵ what matters here is its Christian profile.

The affiliation of the Saracens to Christianity is clearly implied in the phrase that speaks of them as living in the shadow of "our Christ-loving state." This roundabout way of referring to the Arab *foederati*, the Ghassānids, is clearly made in the context of Heraclius' war as a crusade against the enemy, the Persians, a war not waged against another Christian state but against a fire-worshipping one such as Sasanid Persia was. The Saracen contingent referred to in the victory bulletin shared the faith of the rest of the Byzantine army since it was a Christian contingent.

That this citation of the services of the Arab *foederati* should have been included in the bulletin, which was read in such solemn surroundings, from the ambo of St. Sophia on the feast of Pentecost, suggests that they had come a long way in the Byzantine perception. After a century of vilification by a succession of Byzantine historians—Procopius, Evagrius, and slightly later Simocatta—who never even associate the Ghassānids, the protectors of Monoophysitism, with Christianity, they are referred to in this Christian context and their service to the Christian empire is acknowledged.⁶

³ As is clear from the text of this victory bulletin, which has survived, Heraclius had written other letters to the Senate in which other contributions of the Arabs may have been mentioned. This one pertains only to the year 628, and only to what happened shortly before the bulletin's dispatch.

⁴ *Chronicon Paschale* (Bonn ed.), p. 730, lines 7–10.

⁵ See *BASIC* I.1, 642–43.

⁶ That these Saracen allies referred to in the bulletin were the Ghassānids has been argued for in a previous chapter; see *ibid.*, 643–46. That they are not referred to as such should cause no surprise, since the Byzantine Greek sources never refer to them as Ghassānids but always as

III. THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST. ANASTASIUS THE PERSIAN

Three years after this reference to the Arab allies/Ghassānids was read from the ambo of St. Sophia, another spoke of their federate presence in Oriens in a hagiographic context, the *Acta* of St. Anastasius the Persian.⁷ A brief account of the events that preceded the reference will allow a better comprehension of the passage.

After the martyrdom of St. Anastasius in Persia, the abbot of the monastery of St. Anastasius in Jerusalem, Justin, sent one of its inmates, referred to as "the brother," to find out what happened to the martyr. On the brother's return from Persia, Justin sent him out again to bring back the body of the martyr. In the attempts to possess the body, two ecclesiastics in Persia, the catholicus and a bishop, aided the brother. They finally succeeded in acquiring the body stealthily and in putting it in a reliquary chest. Finally, they committed the chest and the brother to the protection of the phylarch of the Saracens, who guarded them all the way from the Euphrates to Palmyra, whence the brother traveled to Arad and Tyre and thence to Caesarea.

The passage involving the Saracen or Arab federate presence in the *Acta* reads as follows.

αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν τιμήσαντες τὸ λείψανον τοῦ μάρτυρος ὡς εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ παραδεδωκότες τὸν ἀδελφὸν τῷ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν φυλάρχῳ ἐξέπεμψαν ἐν εἰρήνῃ μετὰ καὶ γραμμάτων ἰδίων πρὸς τὸν ἀποστείλαντα. ὁ δὲ φύλαρχος διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου ἀπεκατέστησεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν μέχρι Παλμύρης χρονίσαντα μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν ταῖς παρεμβολαῖς· κακείθεν ἀπελθὼν εἰς Ἄραδον καὶ ἐμβὰς ἐν πλοίῳ ἦλθεν ἕως Τύρου.⁸

The first sentence in the paragraph principally deals with the ecclesiastics involved in the successful attempt to secure the body of the saint: αὐτοὶ refers to the catholicus and the bishop in Persian territory who helped the monk; τὸν ἀδελφὸν refers to the monk of the monastery of St. Anastasius in Jerusalem who traveled to Persia to obtain the saint's body (he is left anonymous in the *Acta*); τὸν ἀποστείλαντα refers to Justin, the abbot of the monastery of St. Anastasius in Jerusalem, who had sent the monk to Persia. The letters sent to Justin (γραμμάτων ἰδίων) may be related to the letter that Justin had sent to Persia to the catholicus there⁹ and which the monk carried

Saracens or *symmachoi*; furthermore, since they were notoriously Monophysite, it would have been rather inappropriate to call them by name from the ambo of a cathedral that was a fortress of Chalcedonianism.

⁷ See *Acta M. Anastasii Persae*, ed. H. K. Usener (Bonn, 1894); *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, I, 27–28. A previous chapter has treated the political and military aspects relevant to the Arabs in the *Acta*; see *BASIC* I.1, 649–50, 658–59.

⁸ *Acta*, p. 13, lines 31–38, right column.

⁹ *Ibid.*, lines 10–11, left column.

with him, presumably involving his aid in securing the body. The catholicus had succeeded in securing the body and, as a final act in this drama, sent letters to the abbot informing him of the success of his endeavors.

In a previous chapter it was argued that this could only have been a Byzantine phylarch, a federate, and that it is practically certain he was a Ghassānid.¹⁰ The route from the Euphrates (the boundary that separated Persian from Byzantine territory) goes through the desert. This is the world of the oriental *limes* and the *Strata Diocletiana* over which the Ghassānids watched, and this was the most dangerous segment of the route from the Euphrates to Palmyra.¹¹ Once there, the phylarch apparently left him since the hagiographer uses the singular, ἄλλθεν, referring to the brother who traveled safely westward to Arad and then boarded a ship to Tyre. The implication is that the route from Palmyra to Arad was safe, and the monk could travel without fear on his westward journey.¹²

The journey from the Euphrates to Palmyra was a long one, and it is stated in the passage that the brother stayed and rested throughout the journey at the camps (*parembolae*) of the Arab phylarch. These dotted this boundary line. So the federate Arabs of the region, both the phylarch and those stationed at these camps, were hosts to the relics of the martyr. Thus the journey added a new dimension, a spiritual one, to these military outposts, which functioned as the temporary resting place of the body of the saint who, moreover, was a miracleworker and as such appears at Palmyra, where he performed a miracle toward the end of his journey with the Arab phylarch.¹³

What must have been especially gratifying to the Arab phylarch was the background of the martyr. He had been a Persian soldier in the occupation

¹⁰ BASIC I.1, 650–51.

¹¹ Noteworthy is the fact that the *Acta* do not name the provinces through which the route from the Euphrates to Palmyra extended; two provinces must have been involved, Euphratesia and Phoenicia Libanensis, that is, if the provinces still retained their names in 631. Similarly, when the body of the saint arrived in Arad and Tyre, no province is named, and none when it arrived in Caesarea. On the other hand, there is reference to the provinces of Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia, during the translation of the body from Jerusalem to Constantinople; see W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Notes on Hagiographical Sources," *Byzantina* 7 (1975), 68. In addition to what H. Gelzer says in this connection as quoted by Kaegi, one might add that the reference to the three provinces may have been inspired by the desire to say that the journey to Constantinople was not undertaken by sea but by land, unlike the journey from Tyre to Caesarea, which was a sea voyage. Note that two of the provinces mentioned are not in Oriens but in Anatolia, while Syria sometimes is used to denote a large portion of Oriens in general (as in the work of John of Ephesus), and not the particular province which went by that name.

¹² Presumably the phylarch was assigned to that territory that extended from the Euphrates to Palmyra. When that city was reached, the phylarch apparently turned the brother over to the Byzantine authorities who escorted him to Arad. The phylarch appears as the "warden of the march," assigned to that sector of the oriental *limes*.

¹³ One among the many *miracula* of St. Anastasius. For the miracle at Palmyra, see *Acta*, p. 22. The Arab element in and around Palmyra must have been strong.

army of Chosroes Parviz in Oriens, but he converted to Christianity and courageously declared his desire to be a martyr. The phylarch was a soldier like the martyr, and he must have derived a special satisfaction from the fact that he was escorting the body of a fellow soldier, a comrade-in-arms. As is well known, the Arabs, especially the Monophysite Ghassānids, were particularly attached to St. Sergius, the Roman soldier and military saint, who was buried in the middle of their desert, the *barbarikon pedion*, and they had guarded his shrine for centuries. The escort service which the phylarch performed for Anastasius must have solidified the faith of the phylarch and all the federate troops along the road from the Euphrates to Palmyra.

Finally, the spectacle of an Arab federate phylarch escorting the remains of a saint across the desert brings to mind previous involvements of the Arabs of pre-Islamic times in the lives of Christian saints and martyrs. St. Sergius has already been mentioned, and St. Simeon the Stylite in the fifth century comes to mind as a closer parallel. In the case of Sergius, the Arab involvement in the escort of his body and the circumstance of his burial in his final resting place are not entirely clear. In the case of Simeon, it is explicitly recorded in the *Vita* of Simeon by Theodoret. When news of the saint's death was announced, the Arabs, who were devoted to the saint, appeared and wanted to possess themselves of the body.¹⁴

Thus the "funeral procession"¹⁵ of St. Anastasius late in 631, from the Euphrates to Palmyra, escorted by an Arab phylarch, is the last echo in the sources of the devotion of the federate Arabs to a Christian saint in pre-Islamic times before the Arab Conquest of Oriens, a few years later in the same decade.

IV. THE GHASSĀNID DEFEAT IN ORIENS, EASTER SUNDAY, 634

The last recorded association of the Ghassānids with Christianity appears in the sources before the crushing Byzantine defeat of Yarmūk in 636 which decided the fate of Oriens. After his historic dash from Iraq to Oriens, Khālid, the foremost general of the Arab Conquests, appeared near Damascus and beat the Ghassānids at Marj Rāhiṭ¹⁶ on Easter Sunday while they were

¹⁴ See *BAFOC*, 160.

¹⁵ Shortly before, the region witnessed another procession carrying the holiest of all Christian relics from Persia, that of the Cross, escorted by Heraclius himself, to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Marj Rāhiṭ is a plain that lies fifteen miles northeast of Damascus. It is not far from 'Aḍrā', a toponym associated with the Ghassānids in the poetry of their court poet, Ḥassān; see *BASIC* II. For the battle and the chronology of the military engagements associated with it, see F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), 124–25. The fact that the battle was fought on Easter Sunday attracted the attention of the Muslim historians of the conquests who thus recorded it and in so doing helped fix the correct chronology of the engagements as explained by Donner, *ibid.*

celebrating the feast, on 24 April 634. The defeat was one of many that Byzantium and its allies suffered in these crucial years of disarray in Oriens, but the fact that the Ghassānids were celebrating Easter suggests that Khālid fell upon them unawares, catching them off-balance, and this may have contributed to the defeat.

For the zealously Christian Ghassānids, who lived the liturgical year,¹⁷ the defeat must have stung them to the quick. Some sixty years before, the invincible Ghassānid army under Muṅḍir won a resounding victory against their pagan Lakhmid adversaries on Ascension Day, and this was considered a victory for a Christian army since the Syriac source that reported it so described it: *crux triumphavit*.¹⁸ The defeat at Marj Rāhiṭ must have aroused in them thoughts all too familiar in Byzantine literature, which tried to understand the meaning of the Muslim Arab victory over the Christian Roman Empire in the 630s in terms of a punitive act of God inflicted on the "New Israel of God" because of its sins.¹⁹

If the Ghassānids harbored any doubts about the succor which their God had denied them at Marj Rāhiṭ or at Yarmūk, they did not evince any signs of it after the final and definitive defeat of Byzantium. The negotiations with the second orthodox caliph, Omar, concerning their status were conducted by their king Jabala, around whom was woven a cycle of legendary accounts both while he was still negotiating in Oriens and after he departed and took up residence in Anatolia with the Byzantines. A close look at the sources reveals that Jabala remained firmly within the Christian fold.²⁰

¹⁷ That they did so is clear from the poetry of Ḥassān, who in one of his poems describes preparations for Easter at the Ghassānid court. This will be discussed at length in *BASIC II*; for the time being, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 46 note 1.

¹⁸ See *BASIC I.1*, 345.

¹⁹ Fifty years after the defeat of the Ghassānid host at Marj Rāhiṭ, another Christian Arab tribe, Kalb (and others with it), won the caliphate for the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad dynasty in 684 on the same battlefield; see P. K. Hitti, *History of Syria* (London, 1951), 452.

²⁰ For the fortunes of the Ghassānids and their king Jabala after the battle of the Yarmūk, see the present writer in "Ghassān post Ghassān," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C. E. Bosworth et al. (Princeton, 1989), 324. In that article the question of Jabala's conversion to Islam, considered as a possibility by Nöldeke, was also entertained, but now a closer study of the sources has convinced the present writer that the accounts that tell of his conversion were tendentious yarns.

XVII

The Arab *Foederati* and the Christian Saints

The attachment of the Arab *foederati* to Christianity and their involvement in the theological controversies of the sixth century will now serve as a background against which to survey their relation to certain saints whose cults were popular in Oriens in this proto-Byzantine period.

I. THE ARABS AND ST. SERGIUS

Since the appearance of Jean Sauvaget's celebrated article in 1939, "Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis,"¹ not much has been written on the subject of the Arabs and their relation to both the saint and the city that bore his name. In fact not much has been written on Sergius himself in comparison with other saints. Father H. Delehaye left him out in his well-known monograph, and in the most recent dictionary of Byzantium he appears in a short entry.² But the saint is very important for the Arabs, for the Monophysites, and for Oriens in general. After a half century since Sauvaget wrote, it is only appropriate that a detailed examination of the subject be attempted, especially necessary in a volume such as this one devoted to Byzantium and the Arabs.³ The *praetorium* erected by the Ghassānid Muṅdir outside the walls of Sergiopolis still stands, reminder of the involvement of the Arabs, especially the Ghassānids, in the cult of St. Sergius. But the Ghassānids were not only Arabs; they were also Monophysites and the defenders of Oriens. Hence in order fully to appreciate and understand the Ghassānid and Arab involvement in the cult of St. Sergius, it is necessary to treat the subject from several angles.

¹ See *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 115–30. Before Sauvaget, H. Charles wrote briefly on the Arabs and their veneration for St. Sergius in *Le christianisme*, 31–35. The standard work on Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis is now the multivolume series published by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, of which two volumes had already appeared (see *BAFIC*, 124 note 22), while the third has just come out; see Th. Ulbert, *Resafa III: Kreuzfabrikerzeitliche Silberschatz aus Resafa-Sergiopolis* (Mainz am Rhein, 1990). The volume on the *praetorium* is eagerly awaited.

² See H. Delehaye, *Les légendes grecques de saints militaires* (Paris, 1909), and *ODB*, III, 1879.

³ Besides, Sauvaget wrote as an art historian interested mainly in the architecture of the Ghassānid structure outside Sergiopolis and trying to prove it was not a church but a *praetorium*. The present chapter, on the other hand, is a contribution to ecclesiastical history, but it also provides the larger cultural background for discussing the *praetorium*.

The Fourth to Sixth Centuries

The origins of the Arabs' veneration of St. Sergius are shrouded in obscurity. It must have started long before the sixth century⁴ when the Ghassānids appear on the stage of Arab-Byzantine relations. The saint was buried in their midst, in the sands of Ruṣāfa in the vicinity of which he was martyred, and Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis was in the middle of the "barbarian plain," the βαρβαρικὸν πεδίον of Procopius. This was Arab/Saracen territory. Some Arab tribes may have been witnesses to the martyrdom, and it is possible, on the analogy of other similar situations, that soon after the martyrdom they became the custodians of his relics.⁵ In addition to this, the saint was credited with miracles, most of which pertained to healing, and this may have been another factor that increased the Arabs' devotion to the saint. Furthermore, Ruṣāfa was a station on the route which caravans⁶ traversed from the Euphrates to the southwest, and this would have attracted the Arabs of the region to visit the spot where the *mausin* was held.⁷ The feast of the saint apparently was celebrated at an early date, although its first attestation comes in Theodoret of Cyrillus in the fifth century.⁸ Thus Sergiopolis developed into a pilgrimage center, second in Oriens only to Jerusalem. And the ethnic group that was most associated with the pilgrimage and veneration of the saint were the

⁴ For the earliest attested dedication of a church to St. Sergius in the Provincia Arabia (as early as A.D. 354), see P. Le Bas and W. H. Waddington, *Voyage archéologique* (repr. New York, 1972), III, no. 2124.

⁵ Cf. other episodes involving the Arabs in the preservation of the relics of saints and holy men: on the competition of the inhabitants of two Arab villages for the relics of some martyred hermits, see Cassian, *Collationes*, VI, chap. 1, in *The Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, XI, 351–52; on the veneration of the Arabs for St. Symeon Stylites and the fight for keeping his corpse among them, see *BAFIC*, 149–53, esp. 160 note 7. It was only the intervention of the *magister militum*, Ardabur, that extricated the relics of the saint from the devoted Arabs and transferred them to Antioch.

Perhaps the Arabs of Euphratesia guarded the relics of St. Sergius while they rested in the necropolis outside of Ruṣāfa, before they were transferred inside it.

⁶ Ruṣāfa remained a station on the caravan route and a commerce center even in Islamic times after the fundamental changes in trade routes took place; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1957), III, 481.

⁷ The Arabic word *mausin* means both the "season" and "festival, market"; see *EI*, III, 422, s.v.

The coincidence of the *mausin* with the celebration of the saint's day is dated 7 October or 15 November, depending on whether the celebration commemorates his martyrdom, which took place on the first date, or the dedication of his church in Ruṣāfa, which, according to the Arabic Jacobite Synaxarion, took place on 15 November. See Charles, *Le christianisme*, 33 and Nau, *Arabes chrétiens*, 69 note 1. It is stated in the Synaxarion that fifteen bishops attended the dedication of the church of the saint in Ruṣāfa; see R. Basset, *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite*, PO 3 (Paris, 1909), p. 311.

⁸ See *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* (Rome, 1968), XI, p. 877, quoting Theodoret, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*.

Arabs, who lived in the vicinity and who also traveled to Sergiopolis from other parts.⁹ Sergiopolis also became a center of conversion for the Arabs whither they would go for baptism.¹⁰

Soon after the martyrdom of Sergius during the Tetrarchy, the Arab federate system in the Orient came into being, and the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century were the Tanūkhids.¹¹ The Tanūkhids were settled south of the Euphrates in Chalcidicē, not far from Ruṣāfa, and so the protection of the shrine and Ruṣāfa may have fallen within the frontier area that the Tanūkhids defended.¹²

The involvement of the Arabs continued in the fifth century. Ruṣāfa was not only a station on the caravan route, but also a post on the *Strata Diocletiana*. Toward the beginning of the fifth century, it appears in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, dependent on the *dux* of Syria and Euphratesia who had stationed there a military unit, the *Equites Promoti Indigenae*.¹³ But these, it is practically certain, were Arabs recruited locally for the defense of that spot, most probably Rhomaic Arabs. Other units of *Indigenae* were under the command of the *dux* and these, too, were Arab. So for the defense of Ruṣāfa, where the shrine of St. Sergius was located, Arabs of the regular Roman army, Rhomaic Arabs, were deployed. But these were not the only Arabs who defended the shrine. As has been indicated, federate Arabs—the Tanūkhids of the fourth century—may have participated in its defense, and these remained in the service of Byzantium in the fifth century, which witnessed the arrival of another group of Arabs, the Salīhids, who became the dominant federate Arab group in the service of Byzantium in that century.¹⁴ These were stationed in the south of Oriens far from Ruṣāfa, but one of their kings, Dāwūd, renounced the world and built for himself a monastery, Dayr Dāwūd, not far from Sergiopolis, which may witness to the veneration that the new group of

⁹ This is attested in three 6th-century authors: (1) in Severus of Antioch: see his homily on Sergius, PO 4, pp. 83–94 (the reference to the Arabs occurs on p. 93); (2) in the *Life* of Aḥūdemmeḥ, for which see *Histoires d'Aḥoudeḥmeh et de Marouta*, PO 3 (1909), p. 29; for Aḥūdemmeḥ and the Arabs, see *BAFOC*, 419–22; and (3) in Theophylact Simocatta, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, trans. Michael and Mary Whitby (Oxford, 1986), 132. The Arabs are referred to explicitly in the *Histoires d'Aḥoudeḥmeh*, but clearly implied in the other two authors, who speak of the pastoralists around Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis).

¹⁰ See Severus, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

¹¹ Under Maximianus Daia, rather than Maximian, since the latter never ruled in the West, while the former ruled the prefecture of the Orient within which lay Euphratesia, as well noted by A. Amore in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, XI, p. 876.

¹² For this see *BAFOC*, esp. 465–76.

¹³ For these see *BAFIC*, 467. The Arab unit that defended Ruṣāfa is explicitly described as consisting of *equites*, not cameleers: cf. W. Karnapp, *Die Stadtmauer von Rusafa in Syrien*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Berlin, 1976), 4.

¹⁴ See *BAFIC*, which is mainly on the Salīhids.

federates, the Salīhids, had for the saint, near whose shrine the Salīhid king wanted to be.¹⁵ Soon the imperial government began to withdraw its regular troops from their advanced positions along the oriental *limes*,¹⁶ and so the defense of the easternmost approaches to Oriens fell into the hands of the federates, the Arabs/Saracens in alliance with Byzantium. This process reached its climax in the sixth century with the arrival of the Ghassānids who, toward the end of the fifth century, opened a new chapter in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations and in the Arab veneration of St. Sergius. But before discussing this in detail, it is necessary to discuss the involvement of the Monophysites in his cult. The Ghassānids became fervent Monophysites, and their devotion to the saint was enhanced by their adherence to Monophysitism.

The Monophysites and St. Sergius

Ecclesiastical historians have noted the devotion, even the infatuation, of the Monophysites with St. Sergius,¹⁷ sometimes even to the exclusion of the Nestorians from his devotion, and this continued throughout the sixth century and after.¹⁸ Related to this is the popularity of his cult in Oriens, both this side of the Euphrates and the other in Mesopotamia. So many churches were dedicated to him; so many Christians, especially clerics, bore his name.¹⁹ This Monophysite devotion to St. Sergius, therefore, calls for an explanation.

The first emperor associated with the promotion of the cult of St. Sergius in a large way was Anastasius (491–518). Sometime during his reign, he took a sudden interest in the saint and either brought one of his relics (his thumb) to Constantinople or sent it to Ruṣāfa, which he renamed Sergiopolis and made into a metropolis.²⁰ Anastasius was the first and only Monophysite emperor to reign in Constantinople; after being inclined toward that confession early in his reign, he became openly a Monophysite in its last decade.

Monophysite clerics responded to the interest of their emperor in the saint, and two distinguished members of the Monophysite hierarchy reflect this response. Severus, the patriarch of Antioch, composed a homily on Sergius and delivered it at Chalcis (Qinnasrīn), while Jacob, bishop of Sarūj, composed a metrical panegyric.²¹ Thus both the Monophysite *imperium* and

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 297–301.

¹⁶ On this see *BAFOC*, 465–90.

¹⁷ See J. M. Fiey, "Les saints Serge de l'Iraq," *AB* 79 (1961), 102–14, esp. 111–12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 104, 109–11.

¹⁹ See Charles, *Le christianisme*, 30–31; and A. Poidebard and R. Mouterde, "À propos de Saint Serge: Aviation et épigraphie," *AB*, *Mélanges Paul Peeters*, 67 (1949), 112–14.

²⁰ See E. Honigmann, "Sergiopolis," *RE*, II, A, col. 1658; Devreesse, *PA*, 288 note 12; Marlia M. Mango, *ODB*, s.v.

²¹ For the homily, see *PO* 4, pp. 83–94; for the panegyric, see P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum Syriace* (repr. 1958), VI, 650–61.

ecclesia were united in their veneration of the saint during the reign of Anastasius, reflected in the consecration of one of the great cathedrals of Oriens, that of Bostra in 513 and its dedication to Sts. Sergius and Bacchus. Thus arose a tradition of devotion to St. Sergius among the Monophysites who looked at the reign of Anastasius as the golden reign when the only Monophysite emperor was the *autokrator* in Constantinople and when the patriarch was Severus, after whom Monophysitism in Oriens took on its doctrinal color. The saint continued to be revered in the sixth century by Monophysite rulers, such as the empress Theodora, who sent to Sergiopolis a jeweled cross and, according to one view, built in Constantinople the church in honor of the saint and his companion Bacchus. Other rulers, such as Justinian and Chosroes Parviz, continued to revere him, partly influenced by their Monophysite wives, Theodora and Shīrīn respectively.²²

The question must inevitably arise as to why Anastasius was interested in this particular saint. The most probable explanation may be sought in the outbreak of the Persian war during his reign. After more than a century of peace between the two empires, Byzantium and Persia, the Persian war suddenly erupted. The emperor may have wanted a symbol of resistance to Persian aggression, represented by the invasion of Mesopotamia and the capture of Amida, and a spiritual force that had religious overtones to back his war efforts. St. Sergius afforded the best instrument of that policy. Here was a saint who was a soldier, martyred on the Euphrates front where he was stationed against the Persians, and who above all was buried not far from the border with Persia and the Persian front, in Ruṣāfa. Thus, in this respect, he dwarfed other military saints in Oriens, such as Procopius and George, who were supposedly buried in faraway Palestine.

The Persian war, as a background for the interest of Anastasius in Sergius, may now be related to the involvement of the Arabs. Around the year 500, Nu'mān, the Arab Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, the client of Persia, opened a campaign against Euphratesia with the aim of capturing Ruṣāfa, but he was beaten by Eugenius, the *dux* of Syria and Euphratesia. In addition to posing a direct threat to the holy shrine, which had become the most important pilgrimage center in Oriens after Jerusalem, the thrust of the Lakhmid king was Persian-inspired and was the prelude to the Persian war which broke out shortly after in 502 and continued until 506, when it was concluded, not by a peace, but by a truce.²³

²² Justinian may also have been attracted by the fact that Sergius was Roman, with the good patrician name of Sergius. Zacharia mentions that Pope Agapetus was well received by Justinian when he came to Constantinople since both of them could speak Latin to each other ("quod lingua eadem usus est"); Zacharia, *HE*, versio, p. 94, line 16.

²³ For the campaign of Nu'mān against Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), see *BAFIC*, 121–25.

Although the emperors of the sixth century were all Chalcedonians after the death of Monophysite Anastasius, the cult of Sergius continued, perpetuated and enhanced by the Persian wars which broke out in the reign of every emperor of the century.²⁴ Sergius had become the patron saint of the army of Oriens in its fight with the Persians for the reasons explained earlier. And Persian thrusts against Sergiopolis in the second Persian war of Justinian's reign only riveted attention on the saint, while the failure of the Persians to capture Sergiopolis must have confirmed the faith of Byzantium in the efficacy of the saint's relics as a palladium of Oriens. But it all started with the reign of the Monophysite emperor Anastasius, which witnessed the outbreak of the Persian war. The enhanced interest in Sergius as the Byzantine patron saint in the Persian wars may have been sparked by the above-mentioned campaign of the Lakhmid king Nu'mān against the shrine of the saint at Sergiopolis (Ruṣāfa). The fact that the Ghassānids were the inveterate enemies of the Lakhmids only confirmed them in their devotion to Sergius, if only because the Lakhmids had made a point of attacking his shrine as well as other Christian establishments in Oriens.

The Ghassānids and St. Sergius

The preceding sections have explained the relationship of the Arabs to St. Sergius and Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) in the fourth and fifth centuries, involving both federate (Tanūkhid and Salīhid) and non-federate Arabs. They are the immediate background for understanding the relationship of the Ghassānid Arabs to St. Sergius in the sixth century, and for understanding the *praetorium* erected by the Ghassānid Muḍīr outside the walls of Sergiopolis. In the Ghassānids, Arab veneration of St. Sergius reached its climax, as these inherited the tradition of previous Arab veneration of the saint. Their veneration was enhanced by two features of Ghassānid life and history related to it. The Ghassānids were not only Christians but zealous Monophysites, and thus added to the traditional Arab veneration of the saint that of the Monophysites. They also emerged as the most powerful Arab federate group in this proto-Byzantine period and, what is more, participated regularly in the continual Persian wars of the sixth century along the Euphrates front, after a lull of more than a century in the fifth. This insured their constant awareness of the Sergian presence in their midst, as the saint was the protector of the Byzantine army of the Orient, especially in its wars with Persia. Special mention must be made in this context of the fact that, after the death of Anastasius, the

²⁴ In this connection the equestrian statue of Justinian, erected in Constantinople, may be mentioned, as a reflection of the emperor's interest in the Persian war. According to Procopius, the hand of the emperor pointed to the East, as if against the Persians; see Procopius, *History*, I.5.

Ghassānid supreme phylarch and king emerged as the Monophysite *fidei defensor*, the only Monophysite political and military figure in Oriens in the midst of a Chalcedonian Byzantine hierarchy, political and military, starting with the *autokrator* in Constantinople. This further cemented the ties with the martyr of Euphratesia, whom the Monophysites venerated.

Evidence for this view of the Ghassānids and St. Sergius is provided by the sources—Greek, Syriac, and Arabic—²⁵and these, such as they are after the accidents of survival, will now be laid under contribution. The relevant data from the sources will be outlined chronologically for the reign of each emperor, and they will speak for themselves.

Anastasius

The following data may be gathered together for the reign of Anastasius (491–518).

1. The campaign of the Lakhmid king Nu'mān against Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) around the year 500: the Arabs of Byzantium, whether *foederati* or Rhomaic Arabs, must have been involved in the operation that repulsed Nu'mān and which was led by the *dux* Eugenius.²⁶

2. The Ghassānid thrust in 503 during the Persian war, which was directed against Ḥīra itself, is noteworthy, perhaps in retaliation, *inter alia*, for the attack of the Lakhmid king against Ruṣāfa.²⁷

3. Severus, the patriarch of Antioch, delivered his homily in Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) in memory of St. Sergius and made a specific reference to the Arab pastoralists of the region who would visit the shrine and receive the light of Christianity and baptism.²⁸

4. The Christian Arab inscription, the Zabad Trilinguis—in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic—with its Sergian onomasticon, testifies to the Arab awareness of Sergius at the baptism of their children.²⁹

5. In 513 the great cathedral of Bostra was dedicated to Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in a splendid ceremony attended by Philoxenus, the bishop of Hierapolis. It is practically certain that the phylarch of Arabia, the province of which Bostra was the capital, must have attended. Mundir, his grandson, was invited to the dedication of a much less important church at Evaria (Ḥuwwārīn).³⁰ The celebration in Bostra must have made a great impression

²⁵ For the Arabic sources, see below, 962, and *BASIC* II.

²⁶ On this see *BAFIC*, 467.

²⁷ Before his death in 502 as the result of a wound, he had threatened to take another holy city, Edessa, but died before he could join Kawad in the offensive against it; see *BASIC* I. 1, 12–13, 15, 18, and Rothstein, *DLH*, 74.

²⁸ See above, note 9.

²⁹ See above, 700–701.

³⁰ See *BASIC* I. 1, 457–61.

on the phylarch, presumably Jabala. Perhaps from this may derive the fact that the principal church of the Ghassānids in their main camp-town, Jābiya, was dedicated also to St. Sergius. Thus the saint was commemorated in two capitals, the capital of the imperial province and the capital of the federate Arabs, the Ghassānids.³¹

Justin I

Justin I's reign was short (518–527), and the Ghassānids withdrew from the service during most of it owing to the persecution of their fellow confessionalists, the Monophysites, by the house of Chalcedonian Justin, but the following data may be culled from the fragmentary sources. They deal mainly with the activity of their enemy, the Lakhmid Muḍir, in Oriens.

1. Muḍir waged campaigns of his own,³² but no doubt inspired by Persia, against the oriental *limes* and committed barbarities against the Christian establishment in the first two years of the reign and later in 527.

2. More directly related to Ruṣāfa is his campaign (undated) during which he captured the two Roman dukes, Timostratus and John. It has been argued that John was the *dux* of Euphratesia, which Muḍir apparently attacked. This conclusion is fortified by the fact that at the conference of Ramla in the early 520s the bishop of Sergiopolis, Sergius, appeared, and the conference was convened, among other reasons, to free the two dukes.³³

3. Early in the reign of Justin, the Monophysite bishop Simeon of Bēth-Arshām in Persia appeared in Jābiya, the camp-town of the Ghassānid king Jabala, and invoked his aid in helping the Monophysites of South Arabia after their persecution by the Himyarite dynast of South Arabia, Yūsuf.³⁴ The Ghassānids could not participate in the crusade against South Arabia, but a shrine of St. Sergius appeared in the region (preserved in later Islamic times as "the Mosque of Sarjīs," Masjid Sarjīs). This reflected the migration of the fame of the military saint to that distant region, possibly effected through the Monophysite missionaries who converted South Arabia to their confession, with the possible participation of the federate military group in Oriens, the Ghassānids, whose protective saint he was.³⁵

³¹ In addition to the church dedicated to Sergius in Constantinople. Who of the Ghassānid phylarchs built the church of Sergius in Jābiya is not clear. He could have been Jabala or Arethas, probably the latter; on the church at Jābiya, see above, 931–32.

³² *BASIC* I.1, 42–48.

³³ See "The Conference of Ramla," *ibid.*, 40–42.

³⁴ Simeon appears in Jābiya just before the Ghassānids withdrew from the service of Byzantium; for this see *ibid.*, 33, 36.

³⁵ On Masjid Sarjīs in South Arabia, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 85–87. Of the various candidates suggested for the identification of Sarjīs, in the name of the mosque "Masjid Sarjīs," I am now inclined to believe that it is St. Sergius.

Justinian

The reign of Justinian (527–565), the longest reign of the century, is also most informative on what the imperial government did for Sergius both in Constantinople and in the city that carried his name: building his church in Constantinople and the well-known extensive works of renovation in Sergiopolis. The reign also witnessed the outbreak of two Persian wars and a Persian offensive in Euphratesia that targeted Sergiopolis itself, the city of the patron saint of the Byzantine army in the Persian war. The main source for all this is the chief historian of the reign, Procopius. The contemporary of Justinian was Arethas, the Ghassānid Monophysite supreme phylarch of the Arab *foederati* who inherited veneration for Sergius from his ancestors, and yet Procopius is completely silent on the Ghassānid relationship to Sergius. This is not out of character for Procopius, whose anti-Ghassānid attitude is well known.³⁶

1. The first Persian war (527–532) was fought mainly in Mesopotamia, far from Euphratesia, but the second (540–544) involved three holy cities in Oriens—Antioch, Edessa, and Sergiopolis itself. There is no doubt that the Ghassānids were involved in the operations that centered round these three holy cities, especially the last. This was the most easterly sector of the *Limes orientalis* and a sector of the *Strata Diocletiana* over which Arethas watched, as is clear from Procopius' own account of the *Strata* dispute of 539 which was the occasion for the second Persian war. In 542 the Persian army advanced against Sergiopolis. With them was a contingent of their Lakhmid allies led by Mundir who, in attacking the city, was repeating what his father, Nu'mān, had done around the year 500.³⁷ The city, however, did not fall because of the intelligence that an Arab soldier in the contingent of the Lakhmid Mundir conveyed to the inhabitants of Sergiopolis, and this saved the city.³⁸ If an Arab in the Persian army felt so strongly about Sergiopolis, it is easy to imagine how Arethas and his Ghassānid *foederati* must have felt about it. This was a Persian campaign that failed, and it is possible that the Ghassānids contributed to its failure by a spirited defense of the city, whose saint was their own patron saint, and by fighting in desert territory very much their sector to defend. Since the Ghassānids fought under the aegis of Sergius,

³⁶ On this see *BAFIC*, 121–25.

³⁷ On Ambros (ʿAmr), the Christian in the army of Mundir who saved the city, see Procopius, *History*, II.xx.10, 14.

³⁸ It should also be remembered that Arethas visited Constantinople during the second Persian war in 542/43 for the consecration of the two Monophysite bishops, Jacob and Theodore. Thus religion was not far from his mind, even during the armed conflict with Persia. So the omission by Procopius of the participation of the Ghassānids in the defense of Sergiopolis may be added to the list of *suppressio veri* in his works.

it is inconceivable that they would not have participated in the one campaign that was fought in Euphratesia and around the city of the saint.³⁹

2. The Ghassānids waged a private war with the Lakhmids for many years after the end of the second Persian war in 544. It was most probably waged in those desert regions in Euphratesia, or not far from Sergiopolis. The religious undertones of the war are audible in the account of Procopius, who says that the Lakhmid Munḍir sacrificed one of the captured sons of Arethas to the Arabian Aphrodite. They are also found in the account of Michael the Syrian, who says that after Arethas' great victory over Munḍir in 554, Arethas buried his own son, who had fallen in the former battle, in a *martyrion* near Chalcis. These ten years were years of continual warfare with his Lakhmid adversary, in regions not far from Ruṣāfa, and so the Ghassānids and their king Arethas must always have been especially aware of their relationship to their patron military saint. In fact, before the final battle was joined in 554, a living saint, St. Simeon the Younger, had prophesied to the Ghassānids their victory over their Lakhmid adversaries.⁴⁰

3. The Ghassānids were great builders who erected monasteries and churches, among many other structures. They must have built some monasteries and churches dedicated to their patron saint, Sergius. There is an important reference to a church of Sergius in their capital Jābiya in Palaestina Secunda, the rendezvous of the warring Monophysite parties⁴¹ of Damian of Alexandria and Peter of Callinicum in 587. This then must have been the principal church of the camp-town, Jābiya, the capital of the Ghassānids, and it is quite possible, even probable, that it was built during the reign of Arethas, a long reign that came to an end only seventeen years before that conference was held. Arethas visited Constantinople on various occasions, and he must have seen or even worshiped at the church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus built in Constantinople by Justinian.⁴² Arethas might then have imitated his overlord, Justinian, and built in his own capital a church dedicated to his patron saint. Whether or not the church was built by Arethas is a matter of detail. But it was a Ghassānid structure, the principal church in the capital, a fact reflective of the place of the saint in Ghassānid religious life.

4. Toward the end of his reign, Arethas presided over a church council which condemned the Tritheistic bishops, Eugenius and Conon. A letter has survived, written by the abbots of his Provincia Arabia, which they addressed to Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore, the two Jacobite bishops, endorsing the condemnation. It is noteworthy that the name Sergius recurs often among the

³⁹ On all this, see *BASIC* I.1, 231.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 241–47.

⁴¹ Procopius, *Buildings*, I.iv.3.

⁴² Noted by Charles, *Le christianisme*, 29–30.

signatories,⁴³ and such was the name of the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch (557–560), whose consecration may have been partly brought about by Arethas himself, as was definitely that of Paul in 563. The popularity of the name is indicative of the fact that the Ghassānids lived in an ambience filled with memories of the saint.

5. Finally, it was probably during the reign of Arethas that the Monophysite metropolitan of the Orient, Aḥūdemmeḥ (559–575), did missionary work in Persian territory among the Arabs of Mesopotamia. Especially relevant is his building a *martyrion* for St. Sergius who, according to the writer of the *Life* of Aḥūdemmeḥ, was the favorite saint of the Arabs. He did so as a replica of the *martyrion* in Sergiopolis in order to save the Arabs of Persian Mesopotamia the trouble of having to journey to distant Sergiopolis in Byzantine Euphratesia.⁴⁴

Justin II and Tiberius

The reigns of Justin II and Tiberius (565–582) coincide roughly with the reign of the Ghassānid king Muṇḍir (569–581?), which witnessed the climax of Ghassānid veneration to Sergius, at least as far as extant sources allow one to judge.

1. The first and last years of Muṇḍir's reign are associated with figures around him who bear the name Sergius. The 121st signatory among the abbots of the Provincia Arabia, who in 569 wrote against the Tritheistic bishops Eugenius and Conon, describes himself as "Sergius, priest and abbot of the monastery of ʿŪqabtā: Mār Eustathius, the priest, my auxiliary, the priest of the church of the friend of Christ, the glorious patrician Muṇḍir, has signed on my behalf." In 581, when Muṇḍir was living under house arrest in Constantinople, Maurice allowed him to have one of his notables to accompany him during his exile to Sicily, and he was called Sergius. Between these two dates, when Muṇḍir waged his many successful campaigns against the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, he no doubt did it under the protection of the patron saint, Sergius. His wars were understood by the chroniclers to be religious wars fought in behalf of Christianity. About his victory in 570, the chronicler wrote "*crux triumphavit*."⁴⁵

2. However, it is the *praetorium extra muros* at Sergiopolis that is the most outstanding token of Ghassānid attachment to Sergius. Not only the structure and the inscription, but also the antecedents are evidence for that attachment; hence it is a tripartite story and will be presented accordingly.

a. In 575, Muṇḍir, after a withdrawal from the service of Byzantium for

⁴³ See Honigmann, *Évêques*, 192–95.

⁴⁴ On this, see *BAFOC*, 419–20, esp. note 14.

⁴⁵ On all this see *BASIC* I.1, 345, 463, 539–540, and above, 830–31.

three years, decided to return to the service. Treacherous conduct on the part of Byzantine officials had made him very suspicious of Byzantine intentions. In order to effect a reconciliation, he thought of a most holy spot in the shadow of which he could meet the Byzantine commander Justinianus for the reconciliation, and nothing could be holier than the shrine of St. Sergius. So it was he who suggested the *martyrion* of Sergius at Ruṣāfa as a holy place for the restoration of trust. His trust in the saint who protected him in his wars is evidenced not only by his choice of the latter's *martyrion*, but also in going inside the city with only a few followers. Justinianus could have arrested him if he had wanted to. So it was before "the shrine which contained the bones of the holy Mar Sergius" that the two talked for a long time and were reconciled. Thus the saint worked one of his most important miracles for the Ghassānids and for Arab-Byzantine relations.⁴⁶

b. The *praetorium*: it has been suggested that the undated structure can most appropriately be assigned to the year 575 or slightly after, that is, the year of the reconciliation of Muṣṭafā with Byzantium and his return to the service. The Arab king had for three years left the area open to Persian and Lakhmid raids, as stated by John of Ephesus, and now that he was reconciled, he hastened to put the defense of the region in order by erecting this *praetorium*. From its strategic site, he could control the tribes around it and organize the defense of the region, the region of the saint who made possible his reconciliation and his return to fight against the pagan Lakhmids.⁴⁷ It was *extra muros* for obvious reasons. Sergiopolis was a holy city surrounded by a wall which enclosed churches and monasteries. A secular building that involved defense and meeting with tribal chiefs could only be erected outside the walls of the city. The structure may also have served as headquarters for Muṣṭafā when conducting campaigns in the north against the Persians and the Lakhmids. For a Christian soldier who fought his wars as a crusader, it is possible that he erected the *praetorium* to reflect his gratitude to the saint whose sanctity had insured his reconciliation with Byzantium and whose *eulogia*, his blessings, he probably invoked when he would open his campaigns in the north along the Euphrates front.

c. The inscription in the apse of the *praetorium*, $\nu\iota\kappa\tilde{\alpha} \eta \tau\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta \text{ } \Lambda\alpha\mu\omicron\upsilon\nu\delta\acute{\alpha}\rho\omicron\upsilon$, has been discussed in a previous chapter.⁴⁸ Although it is a set formula which was used on various occasions, it is possible to see in this context the special relationship of Muṣṭafā to the saint. The reference to victory in the verb $\nu\iota\kappa\tilde{\alpha}$ could easily apply to the victorious general that Muṣṭafā was, but it could also be nuanced to include reference to the victory that Muṣṭafā's fortune

⁴⁶ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 373–77.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, 501–5.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*

scored when he was reconciled in the *martyrion* of the very saint who had protected him on the battlefield.

Maurice

The sources for the reign of Maurice (582–602) ally the Arabs closely to Sergius and Sergiopolis. One is a Greek inscription, and the others are two literary Syriac sources.

1. This Greek epigraphic source has been analyzed in a previous chapter⁴⁹ on Ghassānid epigraphy, but the conclusions may be summarized here in this new context. The medallion on which the inscription is engraved has the image of the saint on horseback with the *pallium* floating, and the inscription identifies the owner as a cameleer of St. Sergius. The cameleer was one of others like him, who formed a caravan that provisioned Sergiopolis, a town in the middle of an arid desert region that needed provisions from the outside world. What is significant in the inscription is that the simple cameleer describes himself as one in the service not of the city but of the saint himself, as if the saint was alive as far as he was concerned. One can imagine how much more devoted the Ghassānid soldiers were, whose patron saint Sergius was. Thus, in addition to protecting the city militarily, the Ghassānids were also responsible for provisioning it. As will be indicated in *BASIC II*, they also cared for its water supply.

2. Michael the Syrian has preserved a document that has important references to the relation of the Arabs to Sergius and Sergiopolis, namely, the letter of Peter of Callinicum to Damian of Alexandria, the two warring Monophysite clerics of the year 587. The Ghassānid phylarch Jafna was at Hierapolis, so close to Ruṣāfa, and this implies that the Ghassānids, after their revolt in the early 580s and their return to the service, were again protecting Euphratesia and with it Sergiopolis. More important is the suggestion of the phylarch that the two Monophysite parties should meet at the church of St. Sergius in Jābiya.⁵⁰ As suggested above, this church was most probably built by Arethas who wanted perhaps to imitate his overlord Justinian, who in his capital Constantinople had built the church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus. In any case, whoever built it, the principal church in the principal Ghassānid town, Jābiya, was dedicated to St. Sergius, sure sign of the importance of the saint in the consciousness of the Ghassānids.

3. Another Syriac source, a late but reliable one, also speaks of the relationship of the Arabs to Sergiopolis a few years later than 587, during the revolt of Bahrām Chubīn against his master, the Persian king, Chosroes Parviz. When the latter decided to invoke the assistance of the Byzantine em-

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 507–8.

⁵⁰ See above, 931–32.

peror Maurice in 591, it was an Arab phylarch, Jafna, who acted as intermediary between the two. In the Syriac *Chronicle* he is described as having had his residence in Ruṣāfa itself.⁵¹ Whether or not this is to be taken as literally true is immaterial, but what matters is the continuing association of the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) in the 590s as its guardians.

The Greek and Syriac sources on Arab-Byzantine relations in the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius are so scanty that they could hardly be expected to say much of anything on the relationship of the Arabs to Sergiopolis. However, in 631 there is an implied reference to the fact that the Arab phylarchs were still protecting the region of Sergiopolis. In the *Life* of St. Anastasius the Persian, an Arab phylarch escorts the monk who carried the relics of St. Anastasius in its journey from Persia to Byzantine territory. The phylarch accompanied the monk from a point not clear in the *Life*, possibly the Euphrates at Callinicum or Circesium, until Palmyra.⁵² If he followed the *Strata Diocletiana*, he would have passed through Sergiopolis. In any case, the phylarch clearly was protecting the whole region down to Palmyra.

The Arabic sources, especially contemporary Arabic poetry which goes back to pre-Islamic times, have important references to the association of the Arabs and the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa, and they are important since they provide intimate details which complement what the Greek and Syriac sources have to say. They will be analyzed in *BASIC II* which is devoted to these sources.

The Arabic sources have also some important information on Sergiopolis in Islamic times, then of course known as Ruṣāfa. It attained celebrity when the Umayyad caliph Hishām (724–743) chose it as one of his residences where he built lodges.⁵³ Thus the very Christian holy city of pre-Islamic times became a "capital," or one of the capitals, of the Muslim Umayyad Arabs. The Umayyads took over other recognizably Ghassānid sites such as Jābiya itself, the Ghassānid capital, and this takeover at Ruṣāfa could suggest that there was a substantial Arab presence around it in pre-Islamic times. Ruṣāfa remained a Christian center after the fall of the Umayyad dynasty,⁵⁴ and it was the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century that finally brought about its ruin and destruction.

⁵¹ See *BASIC I.1*, 559.

⁵² See above, 945–47.

⁵³ On Hishām in Ruṣāfa and the Muslim Arab period, see the material collected by Musil in *Palmyrena*, 268–72.

⁵⁴ On the Christian Arabic inscription and graffito of Islamic times, found in Sergiopolis, see R. G. Khoury, "VII. Die arabischen Inschriften," in Th. Ulbert, *Resafa II: Die Basilika des Heiligen Kreuzes in Resafa-Sergiopolis* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986), 179–80. The Christianity of most of the inhabitants of Ruṣāfa in late Islamic times is also attested in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, III, 48.

II. TWO ARAB SAINTS: COSMAS AND DAMIAN

Veneration for the two patrons of medicine and pharmacy,⁵⁵ Cosmas and Damian, witnessed a certain revival in the sixth century, although their memory had always been green in the East and the West. Since the two are said to have come from Arabia, it is appropriate to discuss them briefly here. According to tradition, the two brothers were martyred during the reign of Diocletian. The cult of these "silverless" (*anargyroi*) doctors received a wide vogue, and Theodoret testifies to the fame of their basilica in Cyrrhus as early as the fifth century. Their *Vita* and *Passio* present many problems, but only two that are relevant to the concerns of this volume will be discussed: their alleged Arabness and the rise in their popularity in the sixth century.⁵⁶

Their Arabness

The problem of their Arabness is entangled with the question of the existence of three pairs of saints who have these names. With one of these pairs are associated three other names: Anthimus, Leontius, and Euprepios. It is this pair considered Arab that is recognized by the Roman Catholic church,⁵⁷ which celebrates their martyrdom on 27 September.

The evidence for their Arabness rests on two foundations: (a) the many references to them as coming from Arabia,⁵⁸ naturally the Provincia (and thus they were Romanized and Christianized citizens of the Provincia); and (b) the three distichs found in the *Menaia*,⁵⁹ which first speak of the martyrdom of the pair, Cosmas and Damian, and then of the other three. They read as follows:

ἐκ τοῦ γένους Ἀράβας ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ξίφους
 θείους ἀριστεῖς οἶδα τοὺς ἀναργύρους.
 Λεοντίου τμηθέντος ὄλετο πλάνος
 λεοντομύμηξ, ὡς Ἰὼβ βίβλος λέγει.
 Ἄνθημος Εὐπρέπειος ἐκτετμημένοι
 ἀνθοῦσι λαμπρὸν καὶ πανευπρεπὲς μάλα.

Reference to their provenance, Arabia, is normally understood to mean that they were also of Arab origin since the Provincia had been the former Arab kingdom, Nabataea, and with the exception of the non-Arab inhabitants of the Decapolis, the population was mainly Arab. Besides, a non-Arab inhab-

⁵⁵ They are still so considered today by the medical profession in the United States.

⁵⁶ For a recent comprehensive article on the two saints, see M. van Esbroeck, "La diffusion orientale de la légende des saints Cosme et Damien," *Études augustiniennes* (Paris 1981), 61-77.

⁵⁷ The Greek Orthodox Synaxaria celebrate their martyrdom on 17 October.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁵⁹ For these three distichs see Ἁγιολόγιον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας (Athens, 1960), s. vv. Κοσμάς, Δαμιανός, p. 257.

itant of one of the cities of the Decapolis would not have been referred to as coming from Arabia. This Arab origin may be supported by the distich which specifically refers not to their provincial provenance, but to their ethnic origin.⁶⁰ The conclusion that they were Arab may then be accepted; it is difficult to believe that statements on their provenance and ethnic origin could have been concocted.

Their reputation had spread even to the Roman Occident and to Rome, where their names had been inserted in the canon of the Mass; they were the last of the saints to be accorded that honor.⁶¹ But the surge of their popularity and the vogue of their cult in the sixth century may be related to the plague that spread throughout the Near East in 541–544. There was a natural connection between the outbreak of the plague and the popularity of saints who were the patrons of doctors and who were saints of healing; they became especially relevant in that circumstance. The truth of this statement is not purely inferential. There is an explicit statement to that effect in Procopius, who described the rebuilding and enlargement of their church in Constantinople.

At the far end of the bay, on the ground which rises steeply in a sharp slope, stands a sanctuary dedicated from ancient times to Saints Cosmas and Damian. When the Emperor himself once lay seriously ill, giving the appearance of being actually dead (in fact he had been given up by the physicians as being already numbered among the dead), these Saints came to him here in a vision, and saved him unexpectedly and contrary to all human reason and raised him up. In gratitude he gave them such requital as a mortal may, by changing entirely and remodelling the earlier building, which was unsightly and ignoble and not worthy to be dedicated to such powerful Saints, and he beautified and enlarged the church and flooded it with brilliant light and added many other things which it had not before. So when any persons find themselves assailed by illnesses which are beyond the control of physicians, in despair of human assistance they take refuge in the one hope left to them, and getting on

⁶⁰ Unfortunately these distichs which speak of their ethnic origin were composed much later in the 11th century by Christopher of Mytilene. It is possible that he based them on some *Vita* that referred to their *ethnic* origin, but he may also, for metrical reasons, have spoken of *Arab* rather than *Arabia*. His *Calendars* of saints have been partially published; see *I Calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo*, ed. and trans. Enrica Follieri, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 63, (1980), I–II; for reference to the Arabs Cosmas and Damian, see vol. I, p. 340 note 3; on Christopher of Mytilene, see her article, "La poesia di Cristoforo Mitileneo come fonte storica," *Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky* (Belgrade, 1964), II, 133–48.

⁶¹ See *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, IV, col. 224. For churches and monuments in their honor in Rome and elsewhere, see *ibid.*, cols. 224–25. For their representation in art, see *ibid.*, cols. 225–37; and *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, VII (1974), cols. 344–51.

flat-boats they are carried up the bay to this very church. And as they enter its mouth they straightway see the shrine as on an acropolis, priding itself in the gratitude of the Emperor and permitting them to enjoy the hope which the shrine affords.⁶²

The passage does not say whether it was during the plague that Justinian was cured of his illness, but the important fact is that his interest in the saints was enhanced after he was restored to health through their intercession. He not only redecorated and enlarged their church in Constantinople, but also paid attention to the city where the two saints were buried, namely Cyrrhus, in Euphratesia, the walls of which he repaired and where he built an aqueduct. Thus imperial interest in the two saints, expressed in both Constantinople and Cyrrhus, must have added to their fame, especially in Oriens, their region of provenance, already deeply interested in the saints because of the great plague. As the region was subject to subsequent plagues throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, interest in the two saints of healing never waned.⁶³

It remains an open question whether or not Justinian was aware of the Arab origin of the two saints and whether this projected an image of the Arabs in his perception different from that which his contemporaries, such as Procopius, presented. The same question may be raised about the Arabs of Oriens, both federate and Rhomaic, whether they were aware that the celebrated saints to whom the Christians of the world came for intercession were Arabs.⁶⁴

III. ST. SIMEON THE YOUNGER AND ST. JULIAN

Although the Ghassānids and the *foederati* in general looked upon Sergius as their patron saint—for obvious reasons, since he was the military saint closest to them—the Ghassānids appear associated with two other saints in the extant sources. Mention has already been made of their veneration for St. Simeon the Younger and the latter's prophecy of the crushing Ghassānid victory in 554 over the Lakhmids.⁶⁵ In addition, one of the inscriptions set up by the Ghassānid Munḍir involves a saint, Julian. It is the one set up at al-Burj, northeast of Damascus, in Phoenicia Libanensis. He had erected a tower there,

⁶² *Buildings*, I.vi.5–8.

⁶³ On this, see L. Conrad, *The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East*, Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 1981).

⁶⁴ Muslim writers refer to the church of Cosmas and Damian as one of "the wonders of the world," but it is doubtful whether Arab visitors to Cyrrhus, who wondered at the church realized that the two saints to whom the church was dedicated were Arabs! For an Edessene family called "Beit Qozma Bar Arabi," "the family of Cosmas, son of 'Arabi,'" see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 412.

⁶⁵ See *BASIC* I.1, 244–48.

and he offered thanks to God and St. Julian for his safety and that of his sons.⁶⁶ The inscription was discussed earlier in its political and military context; a few words may now be added on its ecclesiastical profile.

Which saint was this to whom Muḍir offered his thanks? Oriens had a number of saints with that name: Julian of Arabia, Julian of Jerusalem, Julian of Caesarea, Julian of Apamea, and Julian of Emesa. The chances are that Muḍir offered thanks to the last, Julian of Emesa. The presumption is that at that time he was the regional patron saint in Phoenicia Libanensis, where Muḍir erected his tower at al-Burj, near Ḍumayr.⁶⁷

Muḍir offered thanks to Julian for his safety, *sōtēria*: apparently he had come back from a journey or a campaign that was perilous. This might imply that the saint was one that was invoked on such an occasion, a safe return. Hence the thanks offered to him by the Ghassānid.⁶⁸ The inscription suggests that religious sentiments were alive in the consciousness of the Ghassānid royal house, not only when they fought under the patronage and protection of their military saint, but also on other occasions, in times of peace, when they would offer thanks to saints other than their favorite military one, Sergius.

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, 495–501.

⁶⁷ On Julian of Emesa, see *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, VI, cols. 1195–97.

⁶⁸ It is noteworthy that Julian, martyr and saint, was a doctor by profession; thanks offered after a safe journey or campaign to a saint that was such becomes more understandable.

XVIII

Arab Christianity in Sinai

The Arab presence in Sinai, so well documented for the fourth and fifth centuries, is hardly ever noticed for the sixth and the first part of the seventh centuries, and when it is, it is plagued with anonymity. There is no Moses, Ammanes, or Obedianus to enliven the pages of Sinaitic studies in the Arab presence as there are for the two preceding centuries. There are only a few references in secular and ecclesiastical historians to the usual Saracen raids that frighten monks. And yet toward the end of this period, all of a sudden Sinai reenters the limelight of ecclesiastical history with the figure of Theodore, the bishop of none other than the Arab oasis of Phārān in the southern part of the peninsula. In addition to the role he played during the reign of Heraclius, he survived in the annals of ecclesiastical history through his condemnation at both the Lateran and the Sixth ecumenical councils.

Around 530, Justinian reshaped the structure of the Arab phylarchate in Oriens by making the Ghassānids supreme in its federate history. Arethas was created king and supreme phylarch in Oriens from Arabia to the Euphratesian region, and his brother Abū Karib, the powerful and energetic soldier, was made the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, which administratively included Sinai, after Sinai was separated from the Provincia Arabia and attached to Palestine as part of the newly created Tertia. Although the Ghassānid presence, or rather its extent, in Sinai is not very clear, it is appropriate to round off this part on ecclesiastical history, in a volume focusing on the Ghassānids, by catching the few echoes that point to the Arabs and the Ghassānids in an attempt to discover their role, if any, in the history of Arab Christianity in the peninsula, and whether their championship of Monophysitism has left any traces in Sinai.¹ In order to appreciate fully the Ghassānid dimension of this discussion, it is necessary to elucidate the Arab presence in general in Sinai, especially as this is obscured by the sporadic accounts of the sources on "Saracen raids," and with it the contribution of the Arabs to the history of Christianity in that region.

¹ Basic works on Christianity in Sinai are: R. Devreesse, "Le christianisme dans le péninsule sinaïtique, des origines à l'arrivée des Musulmans," *RB* 49 (1940), 205–33; and H. Leclercq, "Sinai," in *DAFL*, XV.1 (Paris, 1950), 1463–90. Devreesse's misinterpretations of certain aspects of Sinaitic history have been pointed out in *BAFOC*, 308–15, and 145 note 28.

I. THE PENINSULA

Ethnically the Sinai Peninsula was as Arab as the Arabian Peninsula, even more so, since the latter had in the southwest, even at this period, non-Arab groups that were closely related to the Arabs in the larger context of Semitic ethnography but were quite distinct from them.² After the Arab Nabataean period in its history, Sinai became part of the Provincia Arabia in the second century and then part of Palaestina Tertia, and it remained such in this proto-Byzantine period. Not unlike other areas in which the Arabs in the Near East were to be found, Sinai had two types of Arabs: (1) the nomads or pastoralists who roamed about in search of food and water for themselves and their flocks—the Saracens of the Byzantine sources, who raid monasteries, disturb monks, and sometimes massacre them; and (2) the sedentaries who settled in arable lands and habitable spots where an urban life was developed, mainly in the oases. These were not plentiful in Sinai, but what is relevant in this context are the two fertile valleys of Phārān and Raïthou.

In the toponymical trio for which the Sinai Peninsula is known in ecclesiastical history—Mount Sinai, Phārān, and Raïthou—the first is distinguished from the other two by being not a town but a hermitage. It was inhabited by monks who, attracted by its being the reputed scene of the reception of the Ten Commandments by Moses, flocked there from various parts of the Christian world. It is therefore at the two other localities, Phārān and Raïthou, that the Arab element should be sought. These, unlike Mount Sinai, were towns in which people lived and where there was a Christian establishment. In addition to the famous monasteries of the two towns, there were churches built for the tiny Arab communities that lived in them.³

Thus Sinai had these two types of Arabs, the nomads and the sedentaries. The Arabs and Arab authors were very aware of the distinction between the two, and this awareness is reflected in the terms used to denote them. The first, the nomads, are referred to as Badw, al-Badw, or al-A^ʿrāb, while the second are referred to as al-^ʿArab. Moreover, the Arab sedentaries were not on good terms with the Arab nomads and did not think highly of them. This scorn harbored by the sedentaries toward the nomads is expressed powerfully, even enshrined, in none other than the Holy Book of the Arabs and Islam, the Koran itself. There they are referred to, not as Arabs, but as al-A^ʿrāb: "The A^ʿrāb are more hard in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely to be ignorant of the limits which God has revealed to His Apostle."⁴ This distinction is

² On this see the present writer in "Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge, 1970), I.

³ Phārān is the biblical toponym, while Raïthou is considered to be Arabic Rāyat; but see *BAFOC*, 305 note 77.

⁴ Koran, chap. IX, verse 97.

entirely obliterated in the Byzantine sources, and the curious term "Saracen," with its pastoralist overtones, is unfortunately used to denote both types of Arabs and also Arabs in general. Only one ecclesiastical author seems to have observed the distinction and used the correct term when talking about Saracen raids in Sinai. He was a late author who lived in what was then a Muslim country, Egypt, and used Arabic as the language of his *Chronicle*—Eutychius.

II. THE TWIN CITIES: PHĀRĀN AND RAÏTHOU

The two urban centers of Phārān and Raïthou are important in the history of Arab Christianity in Sinai. Phārān was the more substantial and is the better documented of the two, although Raïthou attained more celebrity because of its forty martyrs and thus became the city of martyrs in the Sinai Peninsula. Documents pertaining to both towns have been analyzed in the two preceding volumes of this series. Hence only the briefest account will be given here, and only as a synthesis for the Arab element in them, since this is obscured in all discussion of the two localities, and also as background for understanding the situation in the sixth century.

Phārān

Phārān, "the pearl of Sinai," according to one ecclesiastical historian,⁵ was the major Arab urban center and the see of the bishopric of Sinai in this proto-Byzantine period. It is an oasis of date palms and lies northwest of Mount Sinai. The following observations will help to underline its Arab and Christian Arab character.

Monks flocked from various parts of the Christian world to live in Sinai, as they did in the Desert of Juda, but there is no doubt that the city's inhabitants were Arab, and so Phārān forms the main Christian Arab ethnic concentration in the Peninsula.⁶ It has been a disaster for writing its history that the relevant section on Phārān in Egeria's *Travels* has not survived, since that observant Christian traveler must have included important information on this city.

Thus Phārān appears as a little *polis* in this proto-Byzantine period, inhabited by Christian Arabs who were *Rhomaioi*. Both the *Relatio* of Ammonius and the *Narrationes* of Nilus contain details on Phārān that make it come to life for the student of this small Sinaitic town in this period, and not merely survive as a toponym on a map or in the sources.

Secular Phārān appears in both the *Relatio* of the fourth and the *Narrationes* of the fifth century. In the former it appears as a Byzantine city, whose

⁵ Devreesse, "Le christianisme," 211.

⁶ The Arabness of Phārān was noted by Eusebius and Jerome; see Devreesse, "Le christianisme," 205.

inhabitants fight for the safety of neighboring Raïthou under the leadership of one Obedianus (ʿUbayda).⁷ In the fifth century Phārān appears as a city with a *boulē* one of whose members, a *curialis* with an Arab name, is mentioned. When Saracens around them raid and kill, they send remonstrances to the phylarch in the north, Ammanes, who makes amends.⁸

Evidence of the military activity of the Arabs of Phārān in the service of Byzantium is not lacking for the sixth century when these appear enlisted for defensive operations in Egypt, in spite of the fact that Egypt was separated from Oriens early in the reign of Theodosius. The papyri have revealed that vexillations from Phārān appear in the *numerus* of Antaioupolis, the capital of the Antaioupolite Nome in the Thebaid in 524/25 and in 529/30, and also in another unknown *numerus*.⁹ Again later in the century, during the *biennium* 568–570, when Athanasius was the *dux* of the Thebaid for the second time since 553/54, Phārānites served under him in repelling the Blemmyes,¹⁰ and according to the poet, Dioscorus, also against the Saracens.¹¹ Thus the Phārānites are attested in the Thebaid in the sixth century, not only in Antaioupolis but also in the southern Thebaid as far as Syene¹² (Aswān) on the frontier.

Ecclesiastical Phārān first comes into prominence with the name of Moses, an Arab from Phārān who converted Obedianus (ʿUbayda) and the people of Phārān, and who also exercised influence on the eremitic community of Raïthou.¹³ Around the year 400 it is attested as an episcopal see, with one Nathyr (a Semitic name, and probably Arab), natural to assign to an Arabic-speaking town. There follows a series of bishops after Phārān emerged as an episcopal see, the principal one in Sinai under the control of which were also Raïthou and the monks of Mount Sinai. The list includes Macarius (to whom Emperor Marcian wrote), Photius, Martyrius, and Theodore.¹⁴ The question must remain open whether these bishops of what must have been almost an entirely Arab city were also Arab. The first attested bishop has a Semitic name, and he was probably an Arab. That this set a precedent for his successors to be Arab does not necessarily follow. Their names, unlike the first

⁷ See *BAFOC*, 297–308.

⁸ See *BAFIC*, 134–39; for the Arab name of the *curialis*, see p. 134 note 11.

⁹ See R. Remondon, "Soldats de Byzance d'après un papyrus trouvé à Edfou," *Recherches de papyrologie* 1 (Paris, 1961), 41–92, esp. 85.

¹⁰ See J. Gascou, "L'institution des bucellaires," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 76 (1976), 154 and note 3.

¹¹ See Leslie MacCoull, "Dioscorus and the Dukes," *Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines* 13 (1986), 29–39.

¹² Attested in *P. Lond.* V.1735, which speaks of a *numerus/arithmeticos* of Pharanitae stationed there. See Gascou, "L'institution," 154 note 3. For the *numerus* as a tactical unit in the Byzantine army, see the still very useful footnote in Bury, *HLRE*, II, 76 note 1.

¹³ See *BAFOC*, 298–99.

¹⁴ See Leclercq, "Sinai," col. 1469.

one, are non-Arabic, but even this is not decisive since Arabs assumed biblical and Graeco-Roman names when they were ordained or consecrated.¹⁵

Raïthou

This other oasis is in the valley southeast of Phārān. Although it appears as the smaller local town and less important ecclesiastically, since, unlike Phārān, it was not an episcopal see, it attained importance as a flourishing monastic center that attracted anchorites from outside Sinai.

Raïthou existed and lived in the shadow of Phārān, the larger town and episcopal see. It was a native of Phārān, Moses, himself a monk and celebrated ascetic of the region, that exercised a powerful influence on the monastic community of Raïthou. It was also the chief of the Phārānite Arabs, Obedianus, that won the battle against the Blemmyes, who had attacked the monastic community and massacred its monks.

Less is known about the town than about the monastery. Since the town was close to the sea, it was accessible to monks who came from overseas, such as Menas, the friend of Cosmas Indicopleustes. At Raïthou one of the inmates of the monastery, Daniel, wrote the biography of John Climacus, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, while Climacus himself wrote his famous work at the request of John, the *begoumenos* of Raïthou.

More relevant to the theme of this section is the Arab profile of Raïthou. It must have been especially prominent in the non-monastic portion of the town, where the inhabitants lived, but next to nothing is known about it. More important is the monastic establishment and the Arab component in it. According to the report of Ammonius in his *Relatio*, only one of its hermits was "Roman," an observation that led Tillemont as early as 1732 to think that the other hermits were native to the area, and so Arab.¹⁶ This is possible. Even if this turns out to be an exaggeration, there is no doubt that there was an important component of native Arabs in the hermitage. It also received strains from other Arabs such as those from Petra and Ayla across Wādī ʿAraba.¹⁷

It is relevant to this discussion of the Arab element in Sinai to mention

¹⁵ In this connection it is useful to refer to the bishops of the Palestinian Parembole and those of Elusa in the Negev. These were Arabs, or most of them were, beginning with Petrus, in spite of their names. But no one would have argued for Petrus' Arabness had it not been for the explicit information supplied by Cyril of Scythopolis that he was such. Even the 6th-century bishop of the Arab Parembole, who attended the Council of Jerusalem in 518, namely, Valens, could have been an Arab. The name, a Latin name, was common in the Near East as a cognomen and "was accepted throughout the Roman Empire," so it could have been assumed by an Arab in Palestine who later became the bishop of the Parembole; on the cognomen Valens, see E. Dvorjetski and R. Last, "Gadara—Colony or Colline Tribe," *Israel Exploration Journal* 41 (1991), nos. 1–3, p. 162. The bishops of Elusa are more clearly Arab in view of the names of two of them. On the bishops of the Parembole and Elusa, see *BAFIC*, index, s.vv.

¹⁶ See R.-G. Coquin in *The Coptic Encyclopaedia*, s.v. Raïthou, vol. VII, 2050.

¹⁷ Such as Paul and Joseph from Petra and Ayla respectively; see *BAFOC*, 304–5.

that the architect who built Justinian's monastery on Mount Sinai was Stephanus of Ayla.¹⁸ Whether or not he was an Arab cannot be determined. But Ayla was an Arab city ethnically, and the region was that of the Nabataean Arabs who demonstrated some talent in architecture in their capital, Petra. The Christian Arabs of this period assumed Graeco-Roman names including the name Stephen.¹⁹ So he could have been a Romanized Arab of Ayla. One might add that southern Sinai seems to have attracted the inhabitants of Ayla and Petra, as witnessed by the departure of two Arabs, Joseph and Paul, natives of Ayla and Petra respectively, for the monastic center of Raïthou.

Although Raïthou owes its fame to its being a monastic center, it is even better known for having been the locality where its forty monks were martyred, whose feast is celebrated by the Christian Orthodox church on 14 January, together with those of Mount Sinai. It is not often realized that the Arab involvement in these martyrdoms was considerable. The martyred monks, according to the reasoning above, must have had many Arabs among them. The massacre of the monks was perpetrated not by any Saracens of Sinai but by overseas Blemmyes, who crossed over from the African side of the Red Sea. In addition, those who came to the rescue of the monks during their trial were Arabs, and the rescue mission occurred twice: the first when the Saracens of the area battled the Blemmyes but were worsted by them; and then when the Phārānite Arabs, six hundred strong, arrived under the leadership of Obedianus and fought the Blemmyes all day long and vanquished them.

Such then was the picture of the Arab urban scene in southern Sinai in these two centuries, consisting of Phārān and Raïthou. And in neither of the two monastic establishments was there any molestation of monks by Saracens.

III. THE PASTORALISTS OF SINAI: THE SARACENS

The Saracens, that is, the nomads, pastoralists whom the Arabs themselves called al-A^ḥrāb or al-Badw, roamed the Sinai Peninsula and were mentioned in the ecclesiastical sources. In the *Ammonii Relatio* of the fourth century, they defend the monastic establishment of Raïthou against the Blemmyes, though unsuccessfully. Another group of Saracens raid the hermitages and cells of Mount Sinai and kill forty monks on 28 December. This happened after the death of their phylarch/king when they became lawless.²⁰

In the fifth century they appear again as raiders who massacre a caravan of Phārānite Arabs, molest monks in the vicinity, and kill one, a *curialis* of

¹⁸ For the inscription that records his services as architect, see I. Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions," *DOP* 20 (1966), 257, 262.

¹⁹ For Stephanus, the Arab *hegoumenos* of the lavra of St. Euthymius, in the Desert of Juda, see *BAFIC*, 210.

²⁰ See *BAFOC*, 297.

Phārān. These were Saracens/nomads, who apparently went wild but were punished by their phylarch, Ammanes. In addition, they kill some of the monks of a monastery near Mount Sinai.²¹

This then was the situation in the fourth and fifth centuries during which the Sinai Peninsula was not safe from the Saracens, who roamed it even when they were governed by their chiefs, who had some kind of arrangement with the urban centers for their protection. These Saracens sometimes acted on their own and took advantage of the death of a chief to act lawlessly and engage in raiding.

The descendants of these Saracens of the fourth and fifth centuries are mentioned in the Greek and Arabic sources of the sixth century as having molested the monasteries in Sinai. This finally caused Emperor Justinian to give protection to two of them, Mount Sinai and Raithou. The implication is that Phārān, being a city, was well fortified, as is clear from the testimony of the *Anonymous of Placentia*.²² What is noteworthy in these sixth-century accounts is that, in spite of imperial concern and requests from these monasteries for imperial protection, there were no massacres or large-scale disruptions.

It is not difficult to relate this to improved security in the region as a result of the far-reaching changes that Justinian effected in Oriens with the elevation of the Ghassānids to power around 530. This affected the southern regions, where most probably Abū Karib ruled as a phylarch, praised by Procopius for his energy in keeping in check the Saracens, both those who were enemies to Rome and his own Saracens over whom he was phylarch. As has been argued in a previous chapter, Abū Karib's sphere of operation as a phylarch probably included Sinai or part of it. Another Arab chief, the powerful Kindite Qays, may have been given part of northern Sinai around 530. So the Sinai Peninsula experienced some amelioration in security, which had been poor in the two preceding centuries and which thus explains the unruly behavior of the Saracens at both Phārān and Mount Sinai in those centuries. The Byzantine garrison at Clyisma no doubt contributed to the maintenance of law and order in the peninsula, but because of the nature of the terrain and the climate, federate soldiers, whether Ghassānids or Kindites, must have been more efficient in dealing with their Arab congeners in Sinai.

²¹ See *BAFIC*, 135–36.

²² The account of the *Anonymous of Placentia*, the 6th-century traveler in Sinai, was analyzed in *BAFOC*, 319–24.

For the use of "Saracen mares" in 6th-century Sinai, recorded by the *Anonymous of Placentia*, see *BAFOC*, 323. For the use of the Arabic loanword *faras*, "horse or mare," in Greek φάραξ, see Gascou, "L'institution," 154 note 3, where he corrects Remondon on his use of the phrase "chevaux arabes." The attestations of φάραξ in DuCange's *Glossarium* all come from the Islamic period.

In this connection, mention might be made of the road that connected Ayla on the Gulf of Eilat with Wādī Phārān. This was an old Nabataean highway which connected the two parts of Palaestina Tertia east and west of Wādī ʿAraba. The Ghassānid phylarch, such as Abū Karib, who had important duties in the Trans-ʿAraban region, thus had easy access to the south of the Sinai Peninsula with its three Christian centers of Mount Sinai, Phārān, and Raīthou.²³

IV. PROCOPIUS AND EUTYCHIUS ON MOUNT SINAI

Saracen raids in the sixth century against the monasteries of Mount Sinai and Raīthou, mainly and explicitly the former, are documented in the *Buildings* of Procopius in a laconic passage and in the *Annals* of Eutychius,²⁴ the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century. Both have been examined closely by historians of Mount Sinai, and it is not proposed here to repeat their discussion. Rather these authors will be analyzed for the Arab profile in their accounts relevant to the Arab involvement in Mount Sinai and to the image of the Arabs in Byzantine historiography in the sixth century.

Procopius

In a well-known passage in the *Buildings* on Mount Sinai, Procopius speaks of Justinian's building of a church for its monks and a strong fortress for their protection: "And at the base of the mountain this Emperor built a very strong fortress and established there a considerable garrison of troops, in order that the barbarian Saracens might not be able from that region, which, as I have said, is uninhabited, to make inroads with complete secrecy into the lands of Palestine proper."²⁵

The passage appears without a context that could explain the action of the emperor who was moved to undertake these constructions. Although this can be supplied from other sources, such as Eutychius, the passage will, for the time being, be examined internally and with reference to Procopius himself in another passage in his *History*.

1. One would expect the historian to say that the fortress provided protection for the monks who were living in an isolated part of Sinai. Instead, he hastens to give a curious reason for building the fortress, namely, the protection of villages in Palestine against the barbarian Saracens.

²³ For a description of this road see B. Rothenberg, "An Archaeological Survey of South Sinai," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1970), 18-19.

²⁴ See, for instance, on Eutychius, Devreesse, "Le christianisme," 212-13.

²⁵ The English version of H. G. Dewing in the Loeb Classical Library, *Buildings*, V.viii.9. "Into the lands of Palestine proper" in the English version cannot be the correct translation of the Greek ἐς τὰ ἐπὶ Παλαιστίνης χωρία, which should be translated "into the villages (or small inhabited spots) of Palestine."

2. The statement also sounds strange. A fortress at the foot of Mount Sinai was supposed to offer protection for the province of Palestine against the inroads of the Saracens. The defense of Palestine, both by regular Roman soldiers and by federate troops, was well provided for, and the erection of a fortress could only have been for the protection of the monks in that area of Mount Sinai.

3. Procopius, antipathetic toward the Arabs, succeeds in picturing the Arabs of the region as marauding Saracens, and he enhances the picture of their rapacity by explicitly referring to them not merely as Saracens but also as barbarians.

Another passage in Procopius, in his *History*, throws light on this one in the *Buildings*. In his digression on the Red Sea area and Arabia after the Byzantine defeat at Callinicum in 531, Procopius has a precious passage on the Ghassānid phylarch Abū Karib, whom Justinian appointed as the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia. The passage in its entirety has been analyzed earlier in this volume, but the relevant sentence in the passage on Abū Karib may be quoted here: "And he guarded the land from plunder constantly, for both to the barbarians over whom he ruled and no less to the enemy, Abochorabus always seemed a man to be feared and an exceptionally energetic fellow."²⁶

1. Abū Karib was the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia to which Mount Sinai belonged. His assignment, in addition to fighting the wars of Byzantium *extra limitem*, was internal security within the *limes*, especially in the desert areas such as Mount Sinai, where his federate troops could function more efficiently than regular Roman troops.

2. Ghassānid or other federate Arab troops must have been the ones that defended such a remote place as the Mount Sinai area. Procopius had already praised the energy and efficiency of Abū Karib, in spite of the pejorative "barbarian" that he applies to those under him, seasoned Ghassānid troops who fought for Byzantium and were Christian soldiers at that. Hence they cannot be described as *barbaroi*.

3. The monasteries of Mount Sinai no doubt were attacked by some unruly Arab pastoralists, but it also must have been Arab federate troops that defended the monasteries against these marauding Saracens. Instead, Procopius gives the opposite impression, which excludes the Arabs entirely from participation in the defense of the monasteries and assigns to them only raiding and looting.

Thus the separation of the federate Arabs, whether Ghassānid or other, from the protection of Mount Sinai is consonant with what is known about Procopius' anti-Arab sentiments and his technique. But he gave himself away

²⁶ *History*, I.xix.11.

in the passage in the *History* that assigns Palaestina Tertia, in which Sinai was located, to Abū Karib. A Sabaic inscription has revealed what he had concealed, the relation of Abū Karib to Arethas, his brother. Finally, a Syriac manuscript reveals Abū Karib as a pious Christian soldier who would have zealously defended such a holy place as Sinai, which was possibly within his sphere of phylarchal jurisdiction.²⁷

Eutychius

The most extensive and detailed account of Justinian's involvement in the erection of churches and monasteries in Sinai comes from Eutychius. In spite of the many questions that his account raises, he remains a basic source for this Justinianic involvement. He was a Christian writer who lived in Alexandria, not far from Mount Sinai, and naturally he had a special interest in Christian monuments and history, living as he did in the Muslim world of the tenth century. The kernel of truth in his account is easily discernable.²⁸

His account is lengthy and may be summarized as follows. When the monks of Mount Sinai heard that Emperor Justinian had acceded to the request of St. Sabas, who had gone to Constantinople after the Samaritan revolt of 529, and had provided protection for the monasteries of the Desert of Juda, they too sent representatives to ask the same for Mount Sinai. The emperor then ordered that a church be built at Clysma, a monastery at Raithou (Rāyat), and a well-fortified monastery at Mount Sinai. The emperor was dissatisfied with the building of the monastery and, according to the account, killed the man who was in charge of the construction and sent another person to insure the protection of the monks there.²⁹ The Arab profile of this account consists of two passages, and both deserve a careful analysis.

A

The first passage comes at the beginning of the account when the monks complained to Justinian that the A^rrāb were molesting them as they raided

²⁷ For the Sabaic inscription and the Syriac manuscript, see *BASIC II* and *BASIC I.1*, 328, and above, 845–50.

²⁸ Since L. Cheikho prepared the critical edition of Eutychius in the CSCO, two more recent studies on Eutychius with translations of his work into German and Italian have appeared: M. Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien*, CSCO 471–72, tomi 44–45 (Louvain, 1985); and B. Pirone, *Eutichio, patriarca di Alessandria: Gli Annali*, *Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae* 1 (Cairo, 1987). For a review of Pirone's work, see the present writer in *JAOS* 110 (1990), 530–31. For the old edition of L. Cheikho, see *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, CSCO 50–51, tomi 6–7 (Louvain, 1954). For a penetrating study of the *Annals*, see the recent article by S. Griffith, "Historiography in the Annals of Eutychius of Alexandria," in *Problems in the Historiography of the Early Islamic Period*, ed. L. Conrad (London, 1944), 1–26.

²⁹ For the full account, see Pirone, *Eutichio*, 293–95.

their dwellings, ate their food, and carried away their belongings. In the Italian translation of Eutychius by B. Pirone, the passage reads as follows.

Avendo avuto notizia delle buone disposizioni del re Giustiniano e della sua predilezione nel costruire chiese e monasteri, i monaci di *Tur Sina* si recarono da lui e si lagnarono del fatto che gli arabi ismaeliti li molestavano, si cibavano del loro viveri, distruggevano i loro siti, irrompevano nelle loro celle prendendone tutto ciò che vi si trovava ed entravano nelle chiese cibandosi dell'Eucrestia.³⁰

It is noteworthy that the monks did not complain of any massacres that the Saracens had perpetrated. These were interested only in pillaging the monasteries and in the food that they could find therein. And it is perfectly possible that they did so, not driven by desire to raid and pillage monasteries, but because, living in a desert region, they could suffer from famine. In the same decade, a group of Saracens invaded the oriental *limes*, driven there by a drought.³¹

What is necessary to note in the passage is the careful idiom of Eutychius in reporting. He clearly uses the term *A'rab* for the Arabs who raided Mount Sinai, exactly the term used in the Koran for the pastoralists, the Beduins among the Arabs,³² and as a biblical scholar, Eutychius adds the biblical term for the Arabs, the sons of Ishmael.

B

The second passage comes at the end of the account. It speaks of attempts by Justinian to protect the monastery of Mount Sinai by sending a hundred of "the slaves of the Romans" as guards and adding to them an equal number from Egypt. Houses were built for them near the monastery when they protected the monks. During the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik, much confusion reigned among them; and some of these "slaves" adopted Islam, and they have survived to the present day and are called "the sons of Şāliḥ."

Poi mandò un altro messo assieme e cento uomini scelti tra gli schiavi dei Rum con le loro donne e i loro bambini, ordinandogli di prendere dall'Egitto altri cento uomini con le loro donne e i loro bambini, scelti tra gli schiavi, e di costruire loro, fuori dal *Tur Sina*, delle case perchè vi si stabilissero e proteggessero il monastero e i monaci, curando che

³⁰ Ibid., p. 293, line 39—p. 394, line 5.

³¹ On this Saracen raid caused by a drought, reported by Marcellinus Comes, see *BASIC* I. 1, 194–96.

³² Not precisely translated in either the German or the Italian version of Eutychius where *al-A'rab* is rendered *die Araber* and *gli arabi* (see Breydy, *Eutychios*, t. 45, p. 88, line 31; Pirone, *Eutichio*, p. 294, line 2). For the term in the Koran, see above, note 4.

avessero i necessari mezzi di sostentamento, facendo portare ad essi e al monastero sufficienti viveri dall'Egitto. Giunto che fu al *Tur Sina*, il messo fece costruire, fuori del monastero, ad oriente, molte abitazioni, le munì d'una rocca e vi fece abitare gli schiavi. Costoro presero a proteggere il monastero e a difenderlo. Il luogo si chiama ancor oggi "il monastero degli schiavi." Cresciuti e moltiplicatisi col passar del tempo ed essendosi imposto l'Islàm durante il califfato di 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, s'attaccarono gli uni gli altri e s'uccisero tra di loro: di essi alcuni furono uccisi, altri fuggirono, altri si convertirono all'Islàm. I loro discendenti ancor oggi presenti in quei luoghi, sono dei musulmani detti Banu Salih, chiamati anche Ghulman ad-Dayr/ = domestici del monastero/, da cui provengono i Lakhmidi. In seguito alla loro conversione all'Islàm, i monaci ne distrussero le abitazioni.

The passage bristles with problems. It is not altogether impossible that Justinian sent "slaves" to protect the monastery. On the other hand, it is strange that he should have done that, in view of the newly organized phylarchal power in Sinai, with the Ghassānids and possibly also the Kindites in charge. This, together with certain words or phrases in the passage, could suggest that these "slaves of the Romans" were federate Arabs who were stationed there to guard the monastery. In support of this proposition, hypothetical as it is, the following may be adduced.

a. The reference to the "slaves" throughout the passage may have been inspired by the fact that in Eutychius' day the monastery on Mount Sinai was called Dayr al-'Abīd, "the monastery of the slaves." He or his source wanted to give an explanation of this curious appellation; hence the references to the 'abīd ("slaves") in the passage, projected back to the reign of Justinian.

b. A close examination of the word 'abīd could suggest that there was some confusion with another Arabic word, almost homophonous, 'ibād. Both are plurals of 'abd, which can mean both "slave" and "servant." The Christian Arabs called themselves 'Ibād, "the servants" of the Lord or of Christ, as is the case with al-'Ibād of Ḥīra, the Christians of Ḥīra. If so, this points to a Christian Arab group that guarded the monastery, and these were possibly federate Arabs or a group related to them, who were placed there by some phylarch or by the authorities.

c. The names that Eutychius gives to them could also point in the same direction. Banū Šāliḥ is a good Arabic patronymic. It could be a confusion with Banu Salīḥ,³⁴ the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century, but this is

³³ Pirone, *Eutichio*, p. 295.

³⁴ See, for instance, the confusion in the *ODB*, s.v. Šāliḥids. The entry is on the Salīḥids, the 5th-century *foederati* of Byzantium, but it appears as Šāliḥids, due to some error in printing.

unlikely in view of the existence of the tomb of al-Nabī Šāliḥ in Sinai itself.³⁵ The other appellation given in the passage, however, admits of no great doubt about some former federate status that may be attributed to these “slaves,” namely al-Lakhmiyyūn, the Lakhmids. This is a most uncommon name and can only be the well-known federate Arab group in Persia whose capital was Ḥīra, but some of whom were represented in Byzantine Oriens, most probably as a result of the defection of the Lakhmid king Imru’ al-Qays to the Romans in the fourth century.³⁶

d. Finally, the two words “Lakhmid” and ‘*abīd*’ in the passage may be brought together. They are the solid spots in a passage that, as mentioned, bristles with problems. The two words are related in that the Lakhmid branch of Byzantium had come from the very city in which the ‘*abīd*’/‘*ibād*’ lived, the name given by the Arabs to the Christian population of Ḥīra. Thus, although this conclusion remains hypothetical, the chances are that these guardians of Mount Sinai were former federates whom the authorities or even the Ghas-sānids had stationed there to guard it.

Now that the two accounts of Procopius and Eutychius have been confronted with each other, it is possible to gauge Procopius’ prejudice in the report he gave on Mount Sinai that involves the Arabs.

a. Both are agreed that there were Saracen raids on Mount Sinai, and Eutychius is even detailed on this. But he is careful to specify that these were pastoralists, Beduins, hence his use of the correct term, *A‘rāb*.

b. His account makes clear that the guardians of Mount Sinai in his day were Arabs, Christian Arabs;³⁷ and this section has argued that they were probably former *foederati*, who had been stationed there and charged with the defense of the area.

³⁵ See the note in Pirone, *Eutichio*, p. 311 note 17, where he says that the tomb of Šāliḥ, whom he identifies with the Koranic Arabian prophet, is in Wādī al-Shaykh and that he has a *mawlid* celebrated in May. Šāliḥ was a prophet of the Thamūd, who lived in northern Ḥijāz in pre-Islamic times, and the transference of his veneration to Sinai is strange.

³⁶ For Imru’ al-Qays and the Lakhmid presence in Oriens, see *BAFOC*, 31–61.

In the text of Eutychius, the Lakhmids are mentioned after the reference to Banū Šāliḥ and with the introductory prepositional phrase *wa-min-hum*, “and from them are the Lakhmids.” This has been construed by both translators of Eutychius to mean that the Lakhmids are descended from Banū Šāliḥ, thus understanding the pronominal suffix *hum* to refer to Banū Šāliḥ as antecedent; see Pirone in text quoted above and Breydy who translates “von ihnen stammen auch die Lakhmiden” (*Eutychios*, p. 90, line 31). But the prepositional phrase *minhum* could be construed coordinately with the three other occurrences of the phrase *minhum* in the preceding lines, where Eutychius categorizes the various groups into which the “Slaves” were divided, when confusion set in in their midst during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik. So this construction put on the prepositional phrase restores the identity of this group as Lakhmids of the 7th century, when they are attested in Oriens during the Muslim conquests; see *BAFOC*, 382.

³⁷ It is impossible to believe that they were non-Arabs, those who, centuries later, called themselves Banū Šāliḥ and venerated a well-known prophet, such as Arabian Šāliḥ.

c. In his account of what St. Sabas requested from Justinian, Eutychius includes reference to the Church of Theotokos, in Jerusalem, begun by the Arab patriarch of Jerusalem, Elias, and completed by Justinian.³⁸

Thus, although there were Arab pastoralists roaming in Sinai and the Desert of Juda who molested monasteries, most of the Arabs of the three Palestines were sedentary *Rhomaioi* or sedentarized *foederati*, who were protecting Christian establishments in Palaestina Tertia and Prima. So just as the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza al-Isfahānī supplied the data on Ghassānid buildings that Procopius withheld,³⁹ so do Eutychius and others provide data that supply what Procopius had omitted to mention and correct the image he had projected of the Arabs as raiders of Christian establishments.

Thus, in the last analysis, Procopius loses to Eutychius, as far as the history of Sinai during the reign of Justinian is concerned.⁴⁰ The ecclesiastical historian is detailed and specific, and no motive can be suspected for his having "doctored" the account. His account is punctuated thrice by reference to the contemporary scene of his own day, and this suggests that he may even have visited the site and saw for himself or that he derived his account from some reliable source. A splendid confirmation of the reliability of Eutychius' account has been provided by an exciting discovery made by Dr. Peter Grossmann who, in the late 1980s, uncovered the foundations of the tower which Eutychius had mentioned in his account of Mount Sinai and which was still standing in his day in the tenth century, the same tower that had been mentioned by Ammonius in his *Relatio*.⁴¹ Grossmann also reached the conclusion that, of the two writers on Mount Sinai, Procopius and Eutychius, it is the latter that should be followed. This judgment, coming from one who is not an armchair historian but a resident archaeologist in Egypt, who knows the site and the region intimately, and, what is more, who had his training as an architect, carries considerable weight. And he has indeed presented the case for Eutychius with considerable cogency, namely, that what Justinian built on Mount Sinai was not a fortress but a fortified monastery.⁴²

³⁸ On Elias, the Arab patriarch of Jerusalem, see *BAFIC*, 192–96.

³⁹ When he stopped the description of Justinian's building program at Palmyra, and thus left the sector from Palmyra to Ayla, which witnessed a strong Ghassānid presence, unrecorded. On this and on Ḥamza, see the detailed discussion in *BASIC II*.

⁴⁰ When the section on Eutychius and Procopius appeared in *BAFOC*, 328–29, in 1984, research on the Ghassānid presence in Sinai was not advanced enough; hence in that section Procopius had the edge.

⁴¹ See Peter Grossmann, "Neue Baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen im Katharinenkloster im Sinai," *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (1988), Heft 3, pp. 556–58, also 552. For the tower in Eutychius, see Pirone, *Eutichio*, p. 294, lines 11–14.

⁴² Grossmann, "Untersuchungen," 551–53. In note 22 on p. 551, Dr. Grossmann is quite right when he speaks of Han al-Qaṭṭār as "ein ganz normaler Burgos," which was to be met with all over the Roman frontier and which was occupied by regular Roman soldiers. I did

V. THE GHASSĀNID PROFILE

The Arab federate presence in Sinai has been sketched for the fourth and fifth centuries. It is now only appropriate to sketch that of the Ghassānids with whom this volume primarily deals.

1. The political and military presence is easier to present, since it entails referring to major figures in the history of the Ghassānids who were involved in Palestine: Amorkesos, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo in the fifth century; and Jabala, who appears on the borders of Palestine around the year 500 and who, through the *foedus* of 502, establishes the Ghassānids firmly in the Byzantine orbit. But it is around 530 when Abū Karib becomes the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia that the Ghassānids are more firmly established in that province, on both sides of Wādī 'Araba, thus including Sinai.

2. More important for the ecclesiastical profile is their involvement in the Monophysite movement, which they championed so passionately, and the possibility that this may have had some effects in Sinai which, as part of Palestine, was strictly orthodox. What Abū Karib did or might have done in this respect in Sinai is a closed chapter. Codex Syriacus⁴³ DLXXXV has revealed him as a Monophysite of the Severan type, but whether or not this affected his phylarchate over Sinai is not known.

His more illustrious brother Arethas, however, was involved in Sinai directly. A previous chapter has analyzed the passage in the so-called *Spurious Life of James*, when he crosses the Euphrates to meet Jacob Baradaeus in the hope that his army might be cured from a malady (insanity) that had afflicted it. Jacob tells him to release the holy man from Sinai who was held captive in his camp and adds that if he did that, his army would be cured. Arethas goes back to his camp only to find that his army has already been cured, presumably through the intercession of the saint, and so he releases the holy man of Sinai and has his captor killed.⁴⁴

Something has been said in defense of the possibility that the miraculous account has a kernel of truth in it. In this new context the case may be restated with a few more suggestions for its authenticity.

1. Insanity as the condition that afflicted the Ghassānid host could easily have been related to the famous plague of circa 540.⁴⁵ This is easier to accept than insanity, pure and simple, as the affliction of the Ghassānid army.

2. The association of the Ghassānid Arethas with Sinai, which in the

not, however, identify Han al-Qaṭṭār with the Arab enclosure. The latter is distinct from the Roman *burgos*; see pl. I in *BAFOC* and the caption that goes with it, which speaks of "later accretions of Bedouin enclosures"; pl. II presents the enclosure alone without the *burgos*.

⁴³ On this see above, 845–50.

⁴⁴ On this encounter of Arethas with Jacob, see above, 768–71.

⁴⁵ On this see above, 964–65.

nineteenth century seemed remote to the scholars who expressed their doubts about the authenticity of the account, has been established since 1900, with the publication of the Sabaic Dam inscription in which Abū Karib appears as none other than the brother of Arethas.⁴⁶ Thus Ghassānid influence in Palaestina Tertia including Sinai can easily be predicated, and Arethas' relation to Sinai can be seen to be possible through the phylarchate of his brother over that area.

3. Arethas' brushes with fellow Arab phylarchs in Palaestina Tertia do not seem so remote in view of the data provided by Cyril of Scythopolis on his encounter with a phylarch, al-Aswad, in Palaestina Prima.⁴⁷ The incarceration of a phylarch by another is also attested for the fifth century when Terebon, one of the phylarchs of the Palestinian Parembolē, was put in jail by another phylarch in Arabia and was released only after a holy man, Euthymius, interceded for him.⁴⁸ So this is a parallel case to that of Arethas and the holy man from Sinai.

4. Finally, there is the question of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which the Monophysites zealously undertook. This included not only the Holy Land proper but also Mount Sinai in Palaestina Tertia, to which there was an old Nabataean road that began at Ayla. Arethas lived close to the Holy Land whose military protector, in a sense, he was, guarding it from pastoralist raids. He lived to a ripe old age, and it is difficult to believe that through his long reign of forty years this pious Christian and zealous Monophysite did not make the pilgrimage to Sinai and Jerusalem. So it is perfectly possible that his encounter with the holy man of Sinai took place during such a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain.⁴⁹

What all this amounts to is that the detention of a man from Palaestina Tertia in the Ghassānid camp is not so incredible. The actual circumstances that led to his arrest and detention are not known, but the fact that they are shrouded in obscurity should not argue against the authenticity of the account. It is perfectly possible to imagine that the powerful and aggressive Ghassānid Arethas may have been flushed by success and confidence after his elevation to the supreme phylarchate and kingship in Oriens around 530, and that he accordingly behaved abrasively with some persons in the diocese, including a religious man, since he was also a zealous Monophysite with strong confessional convictions.

⁴⁶ On this see *BASIC* II.

⁴⁷ On this see *BASIC* I.1, 251–55.

⁴⁸ See *BAFIC*, 185.

⁴⁹ On the pilgrimage of the Monophysites to the Holy Land, see J.-M. Fiey, "Le pèlerinage des Nestoriens et Jacobites à Jerusalem," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 12 (1969), 113–26; also the recent article by A. Palmer, "The History of the Syrian Orthodox in Jerusalem," *OC* 75 (1991), 18–43.

VI. THEODORE OF PHĀRĀN

The possible intrusion of Monophysitism into areas such as Sinai and Palestine, which had always been strongly Chalcedonian and Dyophysite, through the extension of Ghassānid political power over Sinai sets the stage for the discussion of the chapter written by Theodore of Phārān in the theological controversy that turns around Monoenergism/Monothelism in the first half of the seventh century.⁵⁰

The three monastic communities of South Sinai—Mount Sinai, Phārān, and Raïthou—counted among them some respectable figures in ecclesiastical history, although they cannot be compared with those of the other Palestinian monastic community of Mār Saba in the Desert of Juda. But early in the seventh century, a bishop of Phārān, Theodore by name, attains fame and distinction with the central authorities in Byzantium, Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius, and notoriety with the Chalcedonians who condemned him at the Lateran Council and the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Sinai had been staunchly orthodox, and all of a sudden one of its bishops in Phārān is accused of downright Monophysitism, which led to Monoenergism and Monothelism. He appears as the spirit behind the vigorous ecclesiastical policy of Heraclius to unite his empire doctrinally throughout the three decades of his reign. Not Sergius but Theodore was the theologian of the new doctrine, while Sergius, although patriarch of Constantinople, seems to have been the intermediary between Theodore the theologian and Heraclius the emperor.⁵¹

Since little is known about Theodore, and in view of his importance in the imperial theology of the first half of the seventh century, it is well that some questions concerning him be raised in this context of Arab Christianity in Sinai and the Monophysite Ghassānid presence in that peninsula.

1. His ethnic origin, like that of the overwhelming majority of ecclesiastics of this proto-Byzantine period, is impossible to tell from his name. These ecclesiastics assumed Graeco-Roman or biblical names, which thus concealed their ethnic origin. This becomes known only when an author goes out of his way to indicate it, as was done, for instance, in the case of another ecclesiastical celebrity on the Palestinian scene, Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who died in 516. Phārān was an Arab town, and the question arises whether or not its bishop, who had to deal with the local population as part of his episcopal

⁵⁰ The best and most lucid account of Theodore of Phārān may be found in E. Amann's article in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris, 1946), XV.1, 269–82, where he is also distinguished from the Chalcedonian theologian, his namesake and neighbor in Raïthou, to whom another article is devoted.

For a recent survey of the sources for Monothelism, see F. Winkelmann, "Die Quellen zur Erforschung des monoergisch-monothelischen Streites," *Klio* 69 (1987), 515–59.

⁵¹ Cf. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 283–307, where the author could have consulted with profit Amann's article, referred to in the preceding note.

duties, was an Arab. The first attested bishop of Phārān, Nathyr, had a Semitic name, and so he was most probably an Arab, in view of the ethnic makeup of the city and the desirability of having a bishop there, especially the first one, who could communicate with the population. Whether this policy was continued or not after Nathyr is not known. All the names of the recorded bishops of Phārān are non-Arab, and so it is impossible to tell their ethnic origin.

2. Theodore has been considered a Monophysite of the Severan type, and this raises the question of whether or not he was influenced by the Monophysitism of the politically and militarily dominant Arab group in the area, the Ghassānids. There is no way of telling. Macarius, the bishop of Phārān, was the recipient of a letter from Emperor Marcian in 451, warning him of a certain Theodosius, a heretic, who caused turbulence in Jerusalem and Palestine, including the Holy Mountain. But after that, Phārān is solidly orthodox until the early seventh century when Theodore appears on the scene.⁵²

3. In addition, at about this time the Monophysite church had a bishop in Jerusalem in the Holy Land: Severus, whose incumbency of the Monophysite see of Jerusalem extended from 590 to 635. Thus at last the Holy Land, which had been kept strictly orthodox after Chalcedon, had its Monophysite bishop. This coincided with the episcopate of Theodore over Phārān, and it is not impossible that a Monophysite influence on him emanated from Severus of Jerusalem.⁵³

It is difficult to believe that the Ghassānid *phylarchs* would or could have affected the doctrinal persuasion of an orthodox bishop of Phārān. But then there was the Ghassānid *bishop*, the namesake of this bishop of Phārān, Theodore, who for thirty years in the sixth century had been preaching Monophysitism in Oriens, and his assignment was in these southern regions, including Sinai. Could he then have done some missionary work in Sinai which finally influenced Theodore of Phārān in the seventh century? There is no way of telling. The only explicit relation of the Monophysite Ghassānids to Sinai consists of the reference in the *Spurious Life of James* to Arethas' detention of a holy man from Sinai in his camp, but that is an isolated episode. Thus one can only refer to these relevant facts in view of the scarcity of information on this Theodore and the influences that affected the evolution of his Monoenergism, but no definite conclusions can be drawn.

VII. THE IMAGE

In spite of the fact that Sinai was inhabited by Christian Arabs who, as urbanites and sedentaries, formed most of its population, their image was tarnished

⁵² For Marcian's letter to Macarius, see Devreesse, "Le christianisme," 207.

⁵³ For Severus, the Monophysite bishop of Jerusalem, see Palmer, "History," 27.

by the pastoralists that roamed the peninsula and apparently still represented its unconverted pockets of paganism. However, the contribution of the Arabs to Christian life in Sinai was not inconsiderable. The inmates of the two monastic centers of Phārān and Raïthou must have counted Arabs among them, and one bishop of Phārān was Arab: Moses, who spread the monastic life in southern Sinai. Obedianus (ʿUbayda) of Phārān fought off the Blemmyes and defended it, and Arab federates guarded the monastery of Mount Sinai in the reign of Justinian.

But what was remembered were the more sensational episodes that associated the Arabs with the massacre of monks and with raids on their monasteries. This was the image that was riveted in the memory of succeeding Christian generations and influenced their perception of the Saracen pastoralists, and with it the Arabs in general. The diffusion and continuance of this perception were due to two circumstances.

1. The massacre of the forty monks of Raïthou and others at Mount Sinai was celebrated in the Christian calendar on 14 January as part of the church's liturgy. This has been one of the main reasons for the survival of this episode since it is renewed every year with the feast of the Sinai martyrs. The celebrants of the Mass for the martyrs understandably forget that it was the Arab contingent of Phārān under ʿUbayda that came to the rescue of Raïthou, albeit too late to save the forty monks.

2. Hagiographic writers, such as Cyril of Scythopolis and John Moschus, who have written on monasticism in the Holy Land, both in Sinai and the Desert of Juda, have naturally recounted episodes of Saracen attacks on monasteries. These have survived in the memory of a large Christian readership rather than the other passages such as those on the Arab bishops of the Parembole in Palestine or on Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem. The spread of monasticism in the East and the West, and interest in works on monasticism in the East where the movement started, tarnished the image of the Arabs in Europe even before the Arabs as Muslims possessed themselves of a large part of the Byzantine Occident. Indeed, not only in the two principal centers of monasticism in Palestine—Sinai and the Desert of Juda—but also in another major center of monasticism in Oriens, Chalcidicē, the same image of the Arabs as Saracens was projected by Jerome. Before he settled in Bethlehem, he had written on his unpleasant experiences with the Saracens of that region, and so with his prestige in the West he also contributed to the projection of the image of the Saracen as the eternal enemy of the inmates of the monastic Christian establishment in the Orient. What Jerome had done in the fourth and fifth centuries, the *Anonymous of Placentia* completed in the sixth with its description of the pagan Saracen pockets in Sinai that had not yet been reclaimed to Christianity, and of the general atmosphere of insecurity that the

Saracen presence in Sinai presented to its Christians, both visitors and residents. Thus his *Itinerarium* may be added to the work of Jerome as a contributor to the projection of that image of the Arabs in the West as unregenerate Saracens, hostile to Christians and Christianity.⁵⁴

VIII. THE SINAI PENINSULA AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Knowledge of the history of the three Christian centers in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula—Mount Sinai/St. Catherine's, Phārān, and Raïthou—is owed to literary documents which recorded their history in the proto-Byzantine period. Such are the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* and the *Sancti Nili Narrationes* and others, which have been analyzed in two of the volumes of this series.⁵⁵ These literary sources have been so thoroughly examined that there is not much room for improvement in the understanding of these texts. Further advances in the study of the early history of these centers rest in the hands of the archaeologist, and this is especially true of Phārān and Raïthou since, unlike Mount Sinai, they were small towns that came into being in the fertile valleys in which they are situated. It is therefore to the results of archaeological work that the student of these two localities must turn for more information. Most of this work has been concentrated on Phārān rather than Raïthou, although St. Catherine's has also benefited from recent archaeological research⁵⁶ conducted by Dr. Peter Grossmann, the excavator of Abū Mīna in Egypt. All students of the early history of southern Sinai are therefore deeply in his debt,⁵⁷ and it is hoped that he will continue to dig at Phārān and to research its early history.

From what has so far emerged from an excavation of the site of Phārān, it is possible to present the following data on this Christian Arab city in southern Sinai, based on publications of Dr. Grossmann as well as personal communications which he kindly supplied.⁵⁸

a. The ancient site of Phārān has been located at what is now called Tall al-Māhrad. The houses, now in ruins, are visible, some of which apparently

⁵⁴ For the *Anonymous of Placentia*, see *BAFOC*, 319–24. In a personal communication, Dr. Peter Grossmann tells me that the date of the Anonymous of Placentia's visit to Sinai has to be changed from ca. 570 to the period 550–560.

⁵⁵ See *BAFOC*, 297–319, and *BAFIC*, 134–39, notes of which will guide the reader to the work of scholars who have dealt with these documents and with Sinai in general.

⁵⁶ See the preceding chapter on his discovery of the foundations of the tower referred to in the *Ammonii Relatio*; above, 980.

⁵⁷ For a preliminary survey of southern Sinai, see Rothenberg, "Archaeological Survey."

⁵⁸ The discussion of Phārān derives its data from the following studies by Dr. Grossmann: (a) "Early Christian Ruins in Wadi Fayran (Sinai): An Archaeological Survey," *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 30 (1984–85), 75–84; (b) "Report on the Season in Fayran" (March 1990), typescript communicated to me personally; (c) two reports on numismatic finds at Phārān: "Einzelfunde Fayran (1986 und 1987)" and "Einzelfunde Fayran (1990)," typescripts.

To these most recent studies on Phārān, may be added Leclercq, "Sinai," cols. 1469–72.

had more than one storey. They are not far from a river that flows in the valley. On an elevated area, there is a sort of a citadel or acropolis.⁵⁹

b. The most impressive ruin of Phārān is the church, the former cathedral of the town. It is built of sun-dried brick, while its columns are made of red sandstone.⁶⁰ The 1990 season of excavation uncovered a "town church" in Phārān, which may have been erected in the second half of the fifth century.⁶¹

c. In addition to the many graves to be found in the hills surrounding Phārān, tombs three storeys high were found in the western part of the town outside the city wall.⁶² To the north of the town there is a locality called Jabal Taḥūna, "the Mountain of the Mill," in which the following monuments were found.

a. On the hill is a necropolis with numerous small tombs of various types but within which may be marked some mausolea of brick or stone; each of these has a domed inner square chamber.⁶³

b. Overlooking the necropolis, on higher ground, stood two small churches, whose ruins are still visible. Both are basilicas, referred to as Churches B and C. Church C, Dr. Grossmann has argued, "forms an early example of the *Weitarkadenbasilika* known hitherto from the early Christian architecture in Syria." He does not exclude altogether its identification with the church described by Egeria, when she visited Phārān, which she located on "the very lofty steep mountain which overhangs Paran."⁶⁴

These monuments of Phārān are dated by Dr. Grossmann to the fifth and sixth centuries, including the cathedral, which he thinks should be dated to the second half of the sixth century.

There is also a ruin which is locally referred to as Dayr al-Banāt, "the monastery of the maidens," but which the author thinks is more likely to have been a military post erected for guarding the southern entrance of Wādī Phārān, since the ruin stands on a steep hill.⁶⁵

Phārān has yielded a relatively large number of coins, which are still unpublished. Some of them were minted in Nabataean times, but most are from the Roman period. They cease, however, before the end of the sixth century.⁶⁶ There is a gap in this numismatic evidence on Phārān between the first and fourth centuries.⁶⁷ Most of these coins are Roman-Byzantine.

As for inscriptions, they are not abundant so far, but it is hoped that

⁵⁹ "Survey," 75.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 75–77.

⁶¹ "Report," 1–3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁶³ "Survey," 78–79.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 79–81, and "Report," 5–8.

⁶⁵ "Survey," 81.

⁶⁶ See "Einzelfunde."

⁶⁷ Dr. Peter Grossmann, personal communication, 1991.

they will be, when the excavation of Phārān progresses. In addition to the two published by R. Lepsius and H. Leclercq, a new one was found at the church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which the editor assigns to the fifth century.⁶⁸ Fragments of other inscriptions are reported by Dr. Grossmann with hopes for more discoveries in later excavations.⁶⁹

All these are Christian inscriptions; unfortunately they are not very informative. Dr. Grossmann writes that the cathedral church of Phārān "contains a number of names in the pavement of the narthex's floor." Perhaps there are some names that may reflect the Arab character of Phārān, although Christian Arabs of this period assumed non-Arab names, biblical and Graeco-Roman.

Through the efforts of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Cairo and under the leadership of Peter Grossmann, an Arab Christian town of this proto-Byzantine period in Sinai is coming to life, as its cathedral and churches are brought to light and emerge out of the ashes, debris, *tumuli*, and *kūms* that litter the fertile valley of Phārān. Thus the town regains, in the consciousness of students of Christian Sinai, its previous status, conceived by one ecclesiastical historian as "la perle du Sinai."⁷⁰

One can only hope that the Institute will also excavate the twin city, Raïthou, the monastic settlement. Archaeology has already made an important contribution in establishing the most fundamental fact about Raïthou, its correct site, which now has been identified not with Arandara⁷¹ northwest of Phārān, but with Tōr, which lies to its south.⁷²

Postscript. Since this chapter was written, Dr. Grossmann (personal communication, July 1992) reported that in the excavation season of February 1992 at Phārān he discovered another small church and succeeded in clarifying a number of questions pertaining to the other churches. We look forward to the publication of these results. In addition, his communication contained the following items relevant to this chapter:

⁶⁸ See Y. Meimaris, "Two Unpublished Greek Inscriptions," *Liber Annuus* 30 (1980), 228–33.

⁶⁹ Dr. Peter Grossmann, personal communication, 1991.

⁷⁰ Devresse, "Le christianisme," 211. For what struck one writer as the *splendeur* of the first church, see Leclercq, "Sinai," col. 1471.

⁷¹ Devresse, "Le christianisme," map, p. 207.

⁷² Yoram Tsafrir established the identity of Raïthou with Tōr; see P. Mayerson, "The Ammonius Narrative," in *The Bible World—Essays in Honor of C. H. Gordon*, ed. G. Rendsburg et al. (New York, 1980), 142 note 33.

Phārān was, of course, a Byzantine city belonging to the province of Palaestina Tertia, and its inhabitants were Rhomaic, not federate Arabs. But this chapter on it has been included because of the relevance of the fortunes of the Rhomaic Arabs in Oriens to the general theme of Byzantium and the Arabs and especially because of the Ghassānids. In this southern region of Sinai, it has been argued that the Ghassānids most probably had a military presence near Mount Sinai for the defense of the monastery and that the Monophysitism of Theodore of Phārān in the 7th century may possibly have had some remote relation to that presence.



The town church from the east, Phārān, Sinai (photo: courtesy Dr. Peter Grossmann, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Cairo).

1. An Arabic inscription was found in the debris of the town church, apparently before the February excavation season. It is fragmentary and unfortunately was used as a pivot for a door. It is so badly mutilated that it is impossible to make sense of what it says. It is important, however, for discussing the Arab identity of Phārān.

2. It had been thought that epigraphy in the narthex of the cathedral might reveal some Arabic names, but apparently it does not since the inscription is an invocation of the Virgin.

3. However, some names were recovered beside one of the mausolea on Jabal Taḥūna "written in the technique of the Nabataean inscriptions but in Greek letters." Some names are recognizable, such as Menas, Sergius, and Cosmas; one or two do not sound Greek and are likely to be Arabic or possibly Coptic.

Epilogue

The Arab and the German *Foederati*: Monophysitism and Arianism

I. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters in Part Two have traced for more than a century the role of the Ghassānids as zealous Monophysites in the ecclesiastical history of this long period. It is not inappropriate to reflect on this long record of support to the Monophysite church on the part of the Ghassānids and the consequences that followed from it,¹ and to discuss it within the comparative context of the Germanic tribes who, like the Ghassānids, were affiliated doctrinally with a confession, Arianism, considered heretical by orthodox Byzantium.

Byzantium understood the great value of the Ghassānids as seasoned federate troops. But as it was intolerant of doctrinal pluralism, it could not accept their Monophysitism and wanted them to come over to the official Chalcedonian fold. Maurice formally tried to bring Nu'mān over in the early 580s and asked him point blank, but the Ghassānid phylarch refused, and so the last chance of converting the Ghassānids was lost. Before Maurice, Justinian had tried to do the same through the mediation of his patriarch and former *comes Orientis*, Ephraim, who approached the grandfather of Nu'mān, Arethas, but he, too, refused. Thus Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in the ecclesiastical sector remained strained to the detriment of both parties. The consequences of this unshakable devotion of the Ghassānids to the Monophysite cause were immensely adverse. It finally led to the arrest and exile of Mundir in 582 and the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate for a *quinquennium*.

There is no doubt that Maurice and Justinian before him strongly believed that the Ghassānid phylarchs had affiliated themselves with a doctrinally erroneous confession and genuinely wanted their reclamation to orthodoxy. That they succeeded in attracting some members of the royal house, brothers of Arethas and of Mundir, is explicitly stated in the sources. In view

¹ This will be treated at great length in the fifth volume of this series, which deals with the rise of Islam and the Arab conquests in the 7th century.

of what happened to Ghassānid-Byzantine relations as a result of Ghassānid Monophysitism, it is not inapposite to raise the question of what might have happened had the Ghassānids either converted from the beginning to an orthodox faith or responded to the call of Justinian and Maurice. They would then have lived in perfect unison with the central government, without the tensions that punctuated their relations throughout the sixth century.

What the course of Ghassānid history turned out to be for more than a century of Near Eastern history as a result of their affiliation with Monophysitism is well known, and this volume has recorded it with much detail. What it might have been if the Ghassānids had become Chalcedonians can only be speculation, legitimate though it is. Comparisons and contrasts with the Germanic *reges* of the Roman Occident who were faced with the same problem of doctrinal persuasion as the Ghassānid kings are very illuminating and can relieve these reflections on the Arab federates of their speculative nature by presenting concrete cases of the counterpart of the Ghassānid historical might-have-been. It is especially fruitful to conduct this comparison with reference to the Ostrogoths and the Franks in Italy and Gaul, as represented by Clovis and Theodoric. And it is a striking coincidence that the three chiefs—Clovis, Theodoric, and Jabala, the kings of the Franks, Ostrogoths, and Ghassānids respectively—were all clients of the same Byzantine emperor, Anastasius.

So it was in the reign of Anastasius (489–518) that these three barbarian peoples began their historic role in the Roman Orient and Occident under these leaders. All were *foederati* of the empire,² and all were faced with doctrinal choices when they adopted Christianity. All recognized the authority of the Byzantine emperor and the continuity of Roman rule and received from the emperors the symbols of their power. But the one element that distinguished Clovis and his Franks from all the other German peoples was his conversion, not to the heresy of Arianism, but to the orthodoxy of the Catholic church in the Occident, and this charted the course of all subsequent Frankish history and indeed German medieval history. A quick survey of the careers of the three rulers will make this point clear.

II. THEODORIC AND CLOVIS

Theodoric (493–526) was an Ostrogoth and an Arian and, like his Ghassānid contemporary, he remained so throughout his reign and refused to change his doctrinal position. He rid the empire of Odovacar and his Heruls/Ruggians in 493/94 when he slew him with his own hands and, in so doing, gave Italy thirty-three years of unprecedented peace and prosperity.

Anastasius had an ambivalent attitude toward him, but finally in 497

² Although their federate status was not exactly identical.

confirmed him as master of soldiers, and recognized, but not without conditions, his governorship of Italy. There was nothing that Anastasius could do with the distant and powerful Ostrogothic king in Italy as far as his doctrinal position was concerned. His antipathy, however, is reflected by his dispatch of some hundred ships against him in 508, at a time when Arian Theodoric was supporting the Arian Visigoths in Gaul.³ The emperor could not do more than this against a Germanic king who, viewed from Constantinople, was only a robber king who had carved for himself a large chunk of imperial territory and was a heretic at that, not conforming to the doctrinal confession of the central government. After a long and glorious reign, the Ostrogothic kingdom of Theodoric was shattered in the decade following his death, when Justinian, who too viewed the Ostrogothic kingdom as that of a robber and a heretic, decreed it out of existence through the military skill of another German, Belisarius. So in spite of his successes and the long period of peace and prosperity he gave to Italy, his kingdom turned out to be ephemeral.⁴ His failure to lay the foundation of an enduring state may be attributed in large measure to his Arian doctrinal complexion, which was not tolerated by orthodox Byzantium nor by the powerful Catholic *ecclesia* in the West.

In sharp contrast to Theodoric and the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy was Clovis and his Frankish kingdom in Gaul. Although the Frank was not far behind the Ostrogoth in ability, there is no doubt that it was his conversion to Catholic Christianity after his victory over the Alemanni in Alsace in 496 that made all the difference for his subsequent extraordinary career. The chief of the Salian Franks, unlike all the other German chiefs who had declared for Arianism, became an orthodox Catholic Christian and behaved as a representative of the official Catholic Christianity that prevailed in both the East and the West. He received from Emperor Anastasius the codicils of the honorary consulship.⁵ What is more, Clovis became a protagonist of the Catholic faith. His Catholic militancy is reflected in his campaign against the Visigoths of Gaul whom he attacked as Arian heretics.⁶

Toward the end of his reign in 511, the founder of the Merovingian house had succeeded in conquering most of Gaul for himself and the Catholic

³ See Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, MGH, *Chronica Minora*, ed. Th. Mommsen (Berlin, 1894), II, 97, for the year 508.

⁴ And so was the Arian Visigothic kingdom in Spain; it is noteworthy that it, too, fell to the Muslim Arabs, in 711, while the Catholic Frankish kingdom in Gaul did not, and actually beat off the Arab offensive in the decisive battle of Tours in 732.

⁵ "Igitur ab Anastasio imperatore codicillos de consolato accepit"; Gregory of Tours, MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, I, p. 88, line 15.

⁶ Gregory of Tours quotes him as saying: "Valde molestum fero, quod hi Arriani partem teneant Galliarum. Eamus cum Dei adiutorium, et superatis redegamus terram in ditione nostra"; *ibid.*, p. 85, line 517.

church, and his great success was in large measure due to his fortunate alliance with that church from which he benefited greatly during his career both as a warrior and as an administrator. Thus, unlike Arian Theodoric, Catholic Clovis did not swim against the imperial and ecclesiastical currents of the day and so succeeded in founding an enduring state. He is the founder of the medieval Frankish monarchy and of the modern French nation.⁷

III. JABALA

More allied to the fortunes of Theodoric than those of Clovis was the fate of the Ghassānid king Jabala. His was a checkered⁸ career due to two facts: unlike Theodoric, he lived in the *pars orientalis* and so was within reach of the imperial displeasure; and unlike Clovis, he lived long enough to witness the confessional change of Anastasius himself from the Chalcedonian position to the Monophysite one around 510. Most probably he swam first with the imperial ecclesiastical current as a Chalcedonian and then as a Monophysite, and so ended up, together with his Ghassānids, as staunch Monophysites. The return of Byzantium to the Chalcedonian creed after some eight years of Anastasius' rule was the beginning of a long history of tensions between the Ghassānids and Chalcedonian Byzantium, and it started immediately, as soon as Justin ascended the throne in 518. There was a period of estrangement between lord and vassal following the persecution of the Monophysites, early in the reign of Justin, and the expulsion of their bishops. This estrangement lasted for some years until Jabala was restored in the late 520s, since Justinian could not fight his Persian war without the help of the Ghassānid *foederati*. Furthermore, Monophysite Jabala and his followers were able to survive because of the protective imperial umbrella of Theodora and the benevolent

⁷ The words of the translator of Gregory of Tours are worth quoting in this connection. Of Catholicism to which Clovis converted, he says:

It placed at his disposal the whole body of the Gallo-Roman bishops, almost all of whom were drawn from distinguished provincial families. The bishops of Gaul were the chief repositories of the higher culture and tradition; they understood diplomatic usage, and possessed the art of administration; they enjoyed immense prestige among the common people, of whom they were the protectors against ill-usage and aggression. No more valuable allies could have gathered to the Frankish standard. They brought not only the strength due to their virtues and their accomplishments, but the influence which they were able to exert among the Gallo-Roman Catholics in Visigothic Aquitaine, who were both numerous and disaffected. Their adhesion assured the triumph of the Franks.

See *The History of the Franks*, trans. O. M. Dalton (Oxford, 1927), I, 92–93.

This long paragraph has been cited for contrast with the career of the Ghassānid Jabala and all subsequent Ghassānid rulers after him, who not only did not have the support of the orthodox Catholic *ecclesia* in the East, but actually had it against them, and it finally contributed its generous share to their downfall.

⁸ The exact course that this conversion took is not clear; see above, 694–96.

ambivalence of Justinian toward the Monophysites. And thus was established the dynasty of Jabala during the reign of Anastasius, a curious federate structure, the Monophysitism of which was frowned upon and fitfully tolerated. As Jabala did not have the full support of the central government and the orthodox *ecclesia*, he and his descendants lived under a cloud, and this circumscribed their historic role in Oriens and the Near East throughout the entire sixth century.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the comparatist effort attempted in the preceding pages on what the Frank, Clovis, the orthodox Christian, was able to do, and what Theodorich the Ostrogoth, the non-orthodox Arian, was unable to do, it is now possible to return to Jabala and the Ghassānids and make the following observations on what they, as non-orthodox, achieved and what they might have achieved.

1. What they achieved as a service to the Monophysite church in Oriens has been fully documented in this volume. What they achieved in Arabia will be discussed in *BASIC II*, which deals partly with Byzantium and Arabia.

2. What they might have achieved may be described briefly as a work in the Arabian Peninsula similar to that of Clovis in Gaul, in spite of obvious differences that obtained between Clovis and Gaul on the one hand and Jabala and Arabia on the other.

Both Judaism and Christianity had made some inroads in that peninsula toward the conversion of the Arabs to a monotheistic faith, but vast tracts remained unclaimed by either faith, and those who were converted were only slightly tintured by Christianity. The Ghassānids were the most powerful of all the three groups of *foederati* that Byzantium had in this proto-Byzantine period. They were most zealous Christians, and above all they were well connected through Azdite tribal affiliation with many and various parts of the Arabian Peninsula whence they had hailed, from the Arabian south. Supported by a central government as well as an *ecclesia*, both of which were zealously evangelistic in the sixth century, the Ghassānids might have made more progress in the process of converting the Peninsula than they had done, progress that might have affected the course of events in the seventh century. But unlike the orthodox Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids, the Ghassānids did not live in unison with the central government and the *ecclesia* doctrinally, since they were Monophysites. This operated to their disadvantage as evangelists in the Peninsula. The evangelistic efforts lacked strong imperial and ecclesiastical patronage. Besides, evangelistic efforts in the Peninsula were not concerted. Nestorianism had for its sphere of operations the eastern half of the Peninsula, while Monophysitism had the western, with influences coming from Meso-

potamia, Ethiopia, and Oriens.⁹ This achieved a measure of success, but the Ghassānids, who would have been the ideal propagators of the faith, were handicapped in their efforts. Internal dissensions within the Monophysite camp distracted the Ghassānids, and conflicts with the central government made them insecure in their home base in Oriens. The climax came in the early 580s when the Ghassānid phylarchate was extinguished. Although this lasted for only a five-year period, the Ghassānids did not regain their former power, and the bitter experience left them suspicious of Byzantium. The effect of all this on the efforts outside the *limes* in western Arabia can be easily imagined. Especially important was the consequence on their activity in Ḥijāz, the cradle of Islam in the seventh century.

Thus the adoption of Monophysitism by the Ghassānids in the reign of Anastasius, and their later refusal to convert to the orthodoxy of the central government, emerge as the most important fact in their cultural life and that of the Arabs in Oriens and western Arabia in the sixth century. Previous Arab *foederati* had been orthodox, the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and the Salīhids of the fifth. If the third wave of *foederati*, the sixth-century Ghassānids, had become orthodox, as their predecessors had been, they would have continued the evangelistic impetus begun by the Tanūkhids and continued by the Salīhids, in much the same way that the second Frankish dynasty, the Carolingians, continued the work of the Merovingians in extending the orthodox faith from the Rhine to the Vistula and adding the Germany of the Saxons to the Gaul already won by Clovis for the orthodox Christian faith.

⁹ This is well illustrated for the other side of the Red Sea by the rivalry between the Chalcedonians and the Monophysites for the conversion of Nubia. The Christian camp was divided in its efforts. Chalcedonian Justinian sent his orthodox bishops, while Monophysite Theodora sent her Monophysites. The latter arrived before the former, and thus Nubia became Monophysite; see Frend, *Rise*, 298–99.

Addenda et Corrigenda

Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century I.1

David Olster's doctoral dissertation (p. 618 note 1) has now appeared in print as *The Politics of Usurpation* (Amsterdam, 1993). And so did Andrew Palmer's manuscript "In the Shadow of the Moon" (ibid., note 2) as *The Seventh Century in West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993).

Dayr Ghassāneh

Dayr Ghassāneh, discussed on p. 654–55, was apparently called as late as the eighteenth century "Dayr Ghassān," when the traveler M. al-Bakrī passed through it. This brings it even closer to the Ghassānids. The inhabitants to whom Bakrī spoke thought that they were descended from "al-Ṣadif, a Ḥimyarite tribe," but they had no very clear conception of their ultimate tribal affiliation, since al-Ṣadif belonged to Ḥaḍramawt, not to Ḥimyar. It is noteworthy, however, that they thought they were not North Arabs but South Arabs, which the Ghassānids also were. The Ghassānids most probably only built the monastery but did not provide it with settlers. The inhabitants who affiliated themselves with the South Arab tribe al-Ṣadif may have moved there in the Islamic period, but they could also have moved in pre-Islamic times. It would be remarkable indeed if the inhabitants of Dayr Ghassān came to Palestine Prima with the Kindites, also, like al-Ṣadif, a South Arab tribe from Ḥaḍramawt, when the Kindite chief Qays was given by Justinian the *hēgemonia* of Palestine around 530, as discussed in *BASIC* I.1, pp. 158–160.

Near Dayr Ghassān lies Khirbet al-Duwayr (Duwayr is diminutive of Dayr, "monastery"), which still contains the ruins of a church and a monastery. For Dayr Ghassān and Khirbet al-Duwayr, see M. M. al-Dabbāgh, *Bilāduna Filastīn*, vol. VIII.2, 266–70.

Karāwā Banī Ghassān

This toponym was discussed in *BASIC* I.1, p. 655. After visiting the area, it became clear that the Ghassānids had no presence south of Nablus (Neapolis). What appears as Karāwā Banī Ghassān is in reality Karāwā Banī Ḥassān or Ḥasan. Ghassān is simply a mistransliteration of Ḥassān or Ḥasan

in the atlas, and Karāwā is the local dialectal form of standard *ḵurā* (villages). I should like to thank M. Sharon for answering my questions on this locality.

Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century

Dayr ʿAmr/Dayr ʿAmmār

On p. 255 it was argued that Dayr ʿAmr in Palestine was possibly a Salīhid foundation rather than a Ghassānid one. But more intensive research, conducted for *BASIC I*, on the involvement of the Ghassānids in Palestine suggests that a Ghassānid provenance for Dayr ʿAmr cannot be ruled out. ʿAmr is an equally good Ghassānid name, and the Ghassānids were heavily involved in building monasteries, as is clear from *BASIC I.2*.

Dayr ʿAmr was also identified with Dayr ʿAmmār, hence its description as “a locality north of Jerusalem.” But more detailed maps of the monastic establishment in Palestine have revealed that these are two distinct monasteries. Dayr ʿAmmār lies indeed to the north of Jerusalem, more precisely to the northwest; Dayr ʿAmr is located 18 kilometers west of Jerusalem, and the remains of a *dayr* (monastery) are visible there. See *al-Mawsūʿa al-Filastīniyya* (Damascus, 1984), vol. II, 428, and Map VI in *BASIC I.2*.

Mawqif al-Naṣrānī

On p. 391 the question of the location of Mawqif al-Naṣrānī was raised. L. Cheikho assigned it to Mecca but did not document adequately. It turns out to be not in Mecca but outside it. It is actually a station on the pilgrimage route from ʿArafāt or Minā to Mecca and is called Wādī Muḥassir or Baṭn-Muḥassir; see the geographical dictionaries of Bakrī and Yāqūt, s.v. Muḥassir. It will be discussed in *BASIC II*.

Platonic Love

On p. 444 note 143, I referred to Platonic love in the strict sense as conceived by Plato himself in the *Symposium*, namely, non-sensual love that obtained between Socrates and his pupils, the *Amor Socraticus*. In the fifteenth century *Amor Platonicus* was used by Marsilio Ficino as a synonym for *Amor Socraticus*, and is now the usual term for non-sensual love between a man and a woman. See Thomas Gould, *Platonic Love* (Westport, Conn., 1981 [reprint of 1963 ed.]).

Al-Māzinī

Readers of the Appendix on al-Māzinī on pp. 457–58 may now read the short article on him by Rudolph Sellheim in *EI*², s.v. al-Māzinī, Abū ʿUthmān Bakr b. Muḥammad.

Ecclesiastical Lists

THE ARAB EPISCOPATE IN ORIENS

The Bishops of the Ghassānids

1. John of Evaria (Ḥuwwārīn): Most probably their bishop, exiled 519
2. Theodore: ca. 540-570
3. John ca. 570-575
4. Antiochus ?

The Bishops of the Palestinian Parembolē

1. Petrus I (Council of Ephesus, 431)
2. Auxolaus (Second Council of Ephesus, 449)
3. John (Council of Chalcedon, 451)
4. Valens (Council of Jerusalem, 518)
5. Petrus II (Council of Jerusalem, 536)

Non-Federate Rhomaic Prelates

A. Two Bishops of Elusa

1. Peter (Council of Jerusalem, 518)
2. Zenobius (Council of Jerusalem, 536)

B. Patriarchs

Elias, Arab Chalcedonian Patriarch of Jerusalem 494-516

With the exception of the Monophysite Ghassānid bishops, all the others were Chalcedonian. Theodore of Phārān of the seventh century may possibly have been Arab.

MONASTERIES IN TOWNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GHASSANIDS

1. The monastery of Abbot Marcellinus
2. The Great Monastery of Gashmīn (Jāsīm)
3. The monastery of Bēth-Sabnīn

4. The monastery of Gashmīn (Jāsīm)
5. The monastery of Gashmīn (Jāsīm)
6. The monastery of Gashmīn (Jāsīm)
7. The monastery of Bēth-Ar^ʿ
8. The monastery of Bēth-Mār Stephen
9. The monastery of Bēth-Ḥālā
10. The monastery of Burgā Ḥawrā (the White Tower)
11. The monastery of Tubnīn (Tubnā)
12. The monastery of Mār-Sarjīs (Sergius)
13. The monastery of Mār-Titus
14. The monastery of Nahrā d'Qaşṭrā (Nahr al-Quṣayr)
15. The monastery of the Mountain of Maḥagga
16. The monastery of Kfar Shemesh
17. The monastery of Bēth-Ilāna
18. The monastery of Dārayyā
19. The monastery of the Tree
20. The monastery of Dārayyā
21. The monastery of Dārayyā
22. The monastery of Lōze (Almond)
23. The monastery of Dārayyā
24. The monastery of the Field of Dārayyā
25. The monastery of Dārayyā
26. The monastery of Mār-Jōnān
27. The monastery of Mār-Paul
28. The monastery of Sakkā
29. The monastery of Buṭṣa^ʿ (al-Buḍay^ʿ)
30. The monastery of Kusītā (Kiswa)

THE CHALCEDONIAN PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPE

Fravitas (489–490)	John Scholasticus (565–577)
Euphemius (490–496)	Euty chius (restored) (577–582)
Macedonius (II) (496–511)	John IV the Faster (582–595)
Timotheus I (511–518)	Cyriacus (596–606)
John II Cappadoces (518–520)	Thomas I (607–610)
Epiphanius (520–535)	Sergius I (610–638)
Anthimus I (535–536)	Pyrrhus (638–641)
Menas (536–552)	Paul (II) (641–653)
Euty chius (552–565)	

THE CHALCEDONIAN PATRIARCHS OF ANTIOCH

Palladius (490–498)	Domninus (545–559)
Flavian II (498–512)	Anastasius (559–570)
Paul (519)	Gregory (570–593)
Euphrasius (521–526)	Anastasius (593–598)
Ephraim (527–545)	Anastasius II (598/9–609)

THE CHALCEDONIAN PATRIARCHS OF JERUSALEM

Sallustius (486–494)	Amos/Neamus (594–601)
Elias (494–516)	Isaac (601–609)
John (516–524)	Zacharias (609–628)
Peter (524–544)	Modestus (630–634)
Macarius (552)	Sophronius (633/4–638)
Eutychius (552–563)	Sergius
Macarius (563/4–574)	Stephan
John (574–593/4)	John (649–?)

THE CHALCEDONIAN PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA

During the period 482 to 537, the patriarchal see was disputed between the Chalcedonians and the Monophysites, but the latter prevailed. After 537 the double hierarchy was established.

Paul the Tabennesiot (537–539)
 Zoilos (539–July 551)
 Apollinarios (July 551–570)
 John II (570–580)
 Eulogios (581–February 605)
 Theodore Scribon (608–609)
 John III Eleemonarios (610 to 11 November 619)
 George (620–630)
 Cyrus (630/31–643/44)

THE POPES OF ROME

Felix III (483–492)	Anastasius II (496–498)
Gelasius I (492–496)	Symmachus (498–514)

Hormisdas (514–523)	Pelagius II (579–590)
John I (523–526)	Gregory I (590–604)
Felix IV (526–530)	Sabinian (604–606)
Boniface II (530–532)	Boniface III (607)
John II (533–535)	Boniface IV (608–615)
Agapetus I (535–536)	Deusdedit (Adeodatus I) (615–618)
Silverius (536–537)	Boniface V (619–625)
Vigilius (537–555)	Honorius I (625–638)
Pelagius I (555–561)	Severinus (640)
John III (560–574)	John IV (640–642)
Benedict I (575–579)	

THE MONOPHYSITE PATRIARCHS OF ANTIOCH

Severus (512–February 538)	Julian (591–594)
Sergius (557–560)	Athanasius (595–631)
Paul the Black (564–581)	John (631–649)
Peter of Callinicum (581–591)	

THE MONOPHYSITE PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA

Athanasius II (488–494)	Peter IV (567–569)
John I (494–503)	Damian (569–605)
John II (503–515)	Anastasius (605–616)
Dioscorus II (515–517)	Andronicus (616–622)
Timothy III (517–535)	Benjamin I (622–661)
Theodosius I (535–567)	

Bibliography

I. SOURCES

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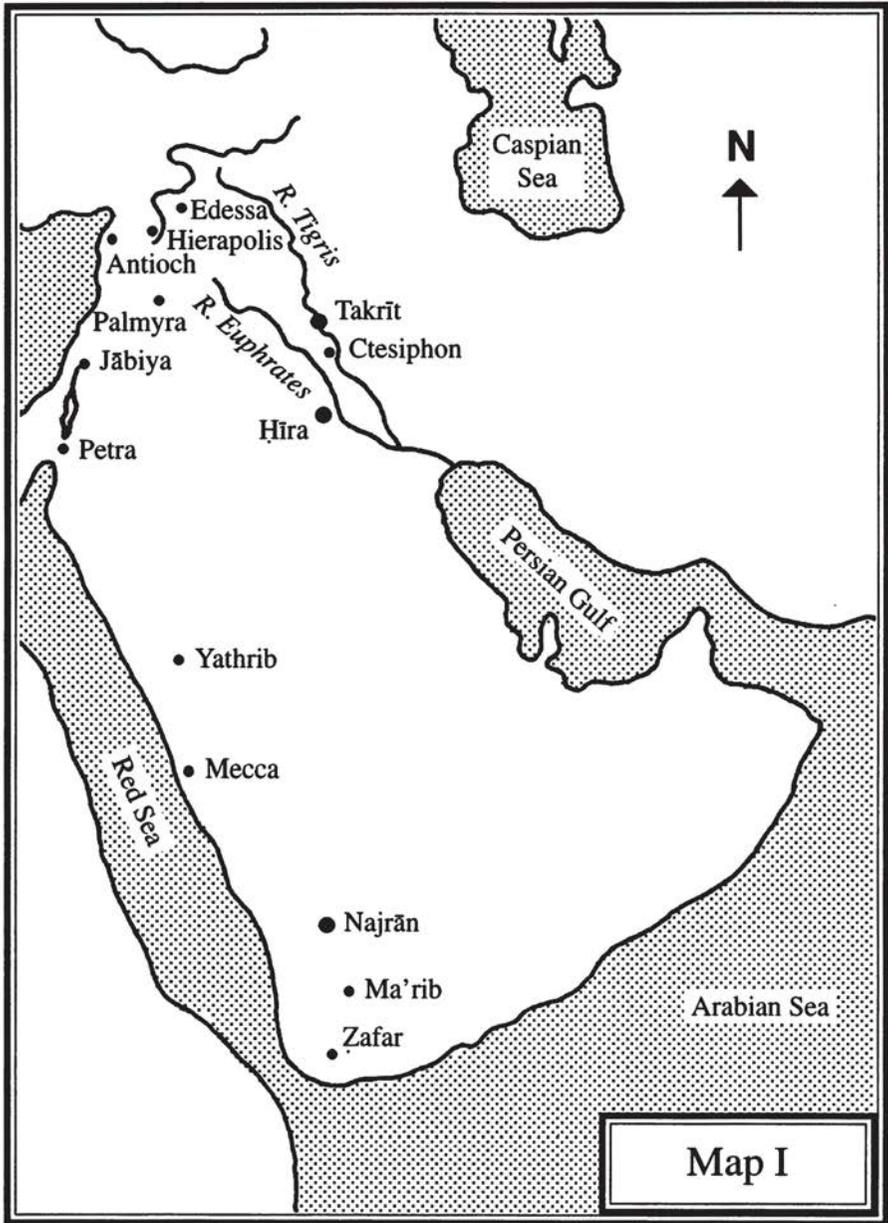
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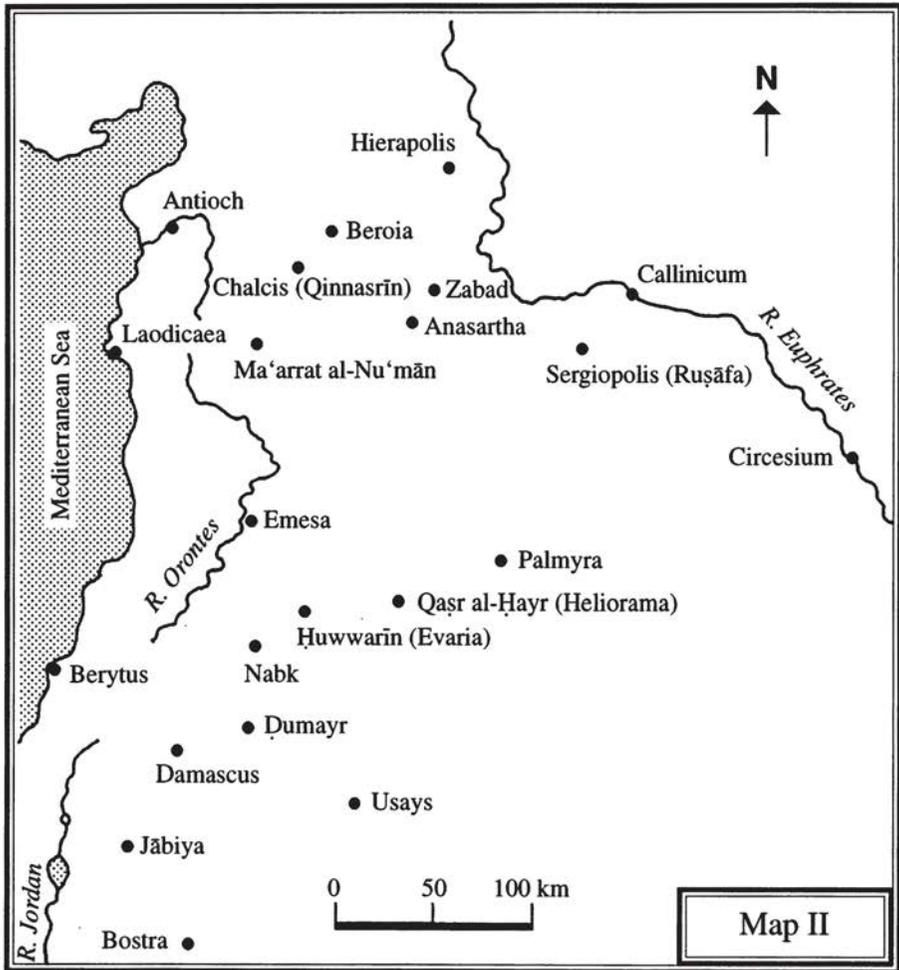
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Map I illustrates the Monophysite mission to the Arabs from the two bases in Oriens, Antioch and Mabboug/Hierapolis, whence Patriarch Severus and Bishop Philoxenus sent emissaries to distant Ḥīra on the Euphrates and Najrān in South Arabia. The map shows also Takrīt, the see of the Monophysite bishop Aḥūdemmeḥ, who evangelized the Arabs of the Mesopotamia region.



Map II represents the northern half of Cis-Euphratesian Oriens, comprising the provinces of Euphratensis, the two Syrias, and the two Phoenicias. Most of the towns and cities on the map figure in the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids and other Arab federates in the sixth century.

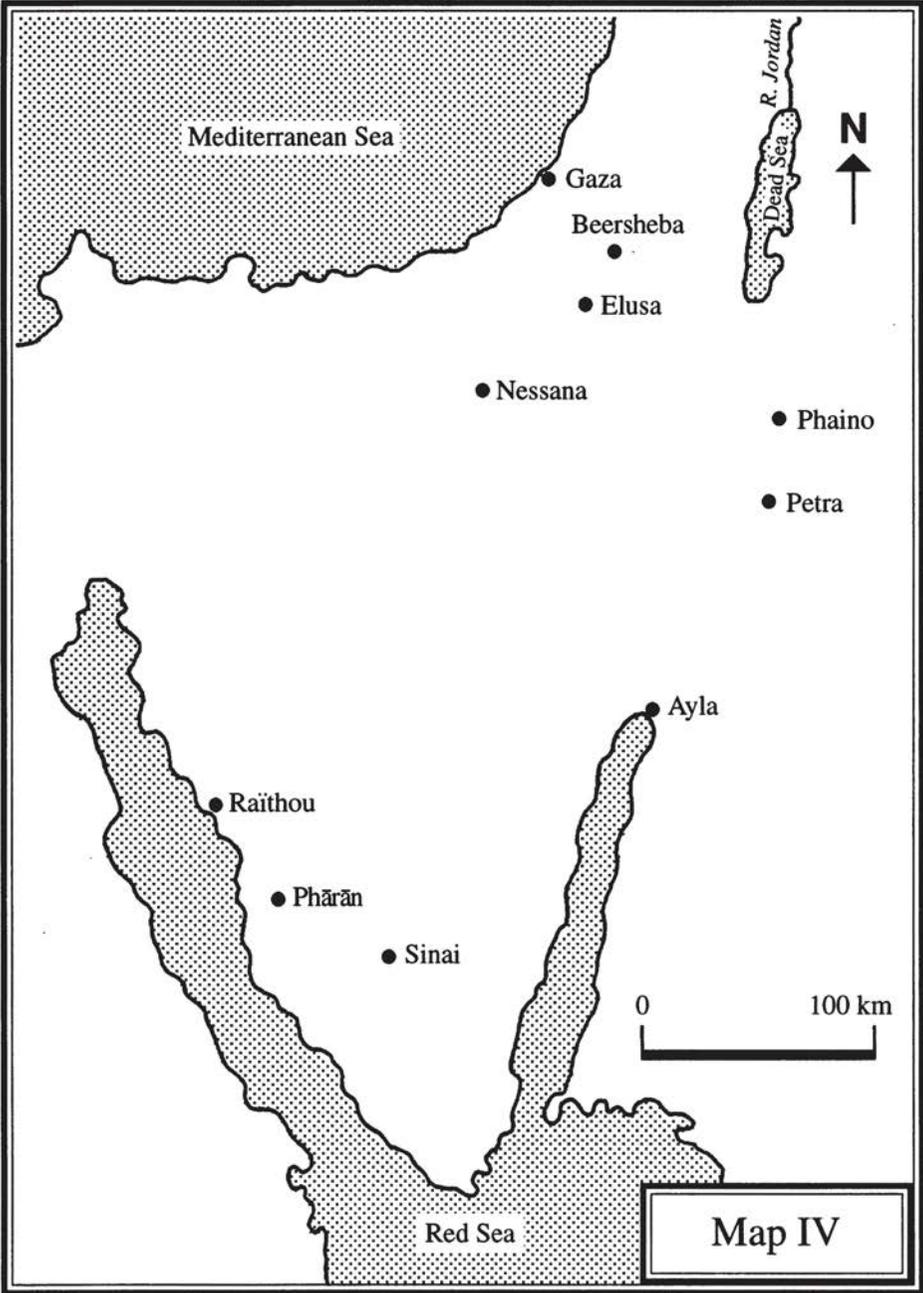


Map III represents the southern part of Cis-Euphratesian Oriens, comprising the provinces of Arabia and the three Palestines, the scene of a strong Ghassānid ecclesiastical presence, especially during the phylarchate of the two brothers Arethas and Abū Karib, the protégés of Justinian.

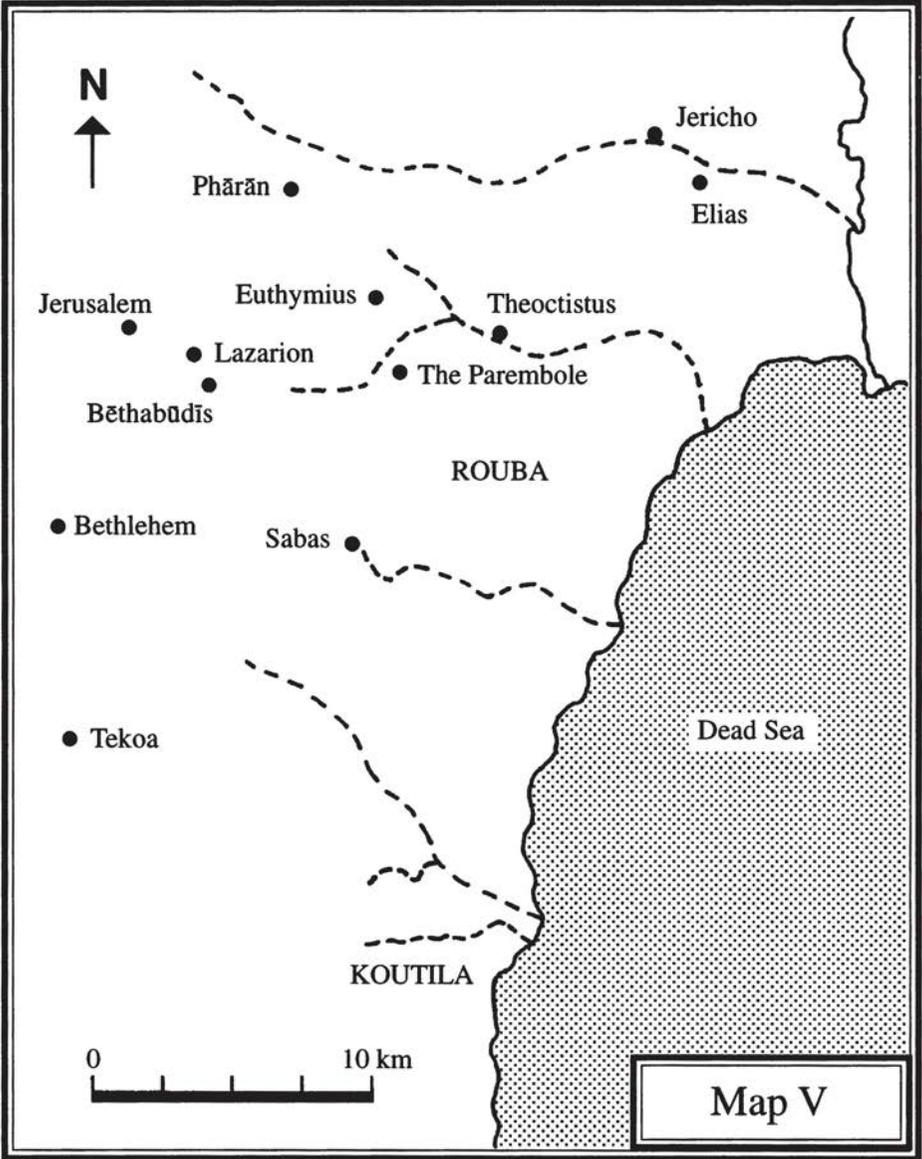


Map III

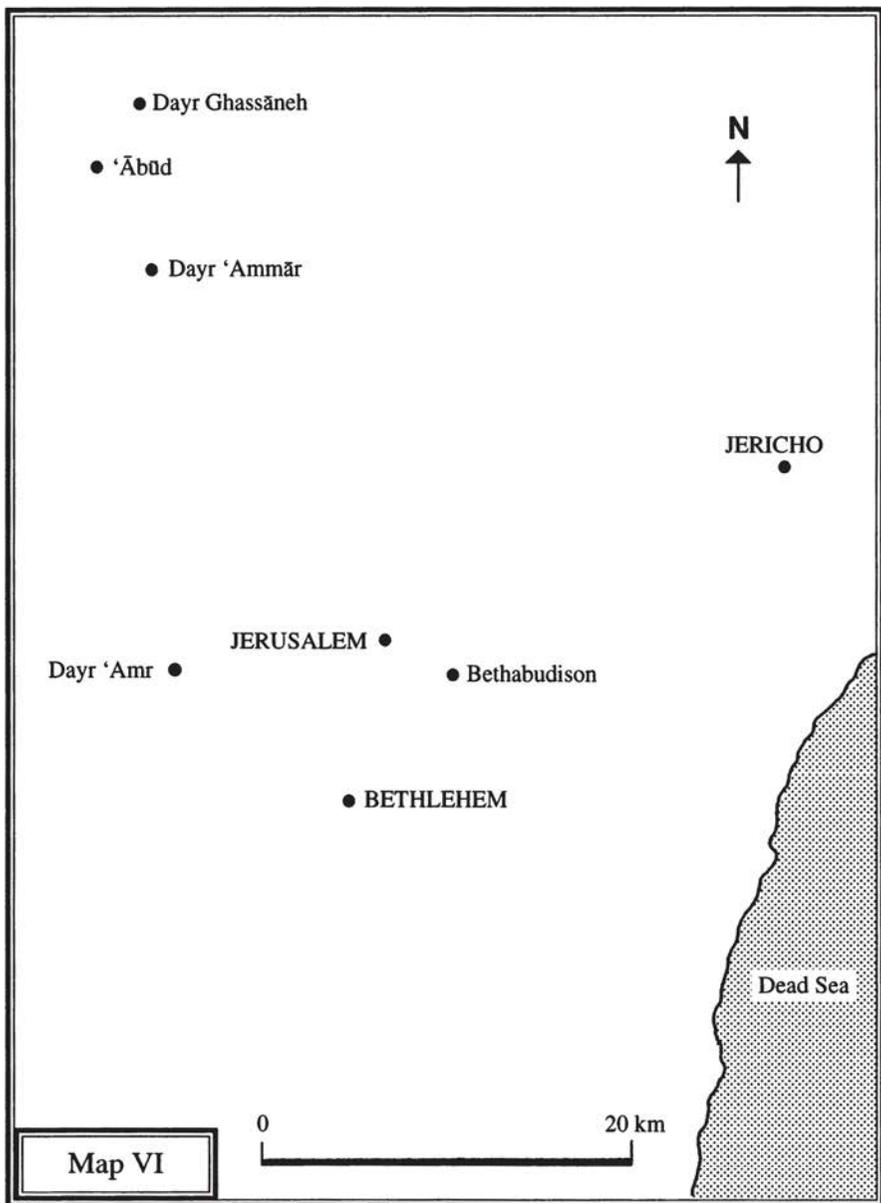
Map IV represents mainly the Sinai Peninsula and the Negev, the larger part of Palaestina III (more clearly than in Map III), where the strongly Monophysite Abū Karib was phylarch, succeeded by other Ghassānid phylarchs of the same doctrinal persuasion; see "Arab Christianity in Sinai."



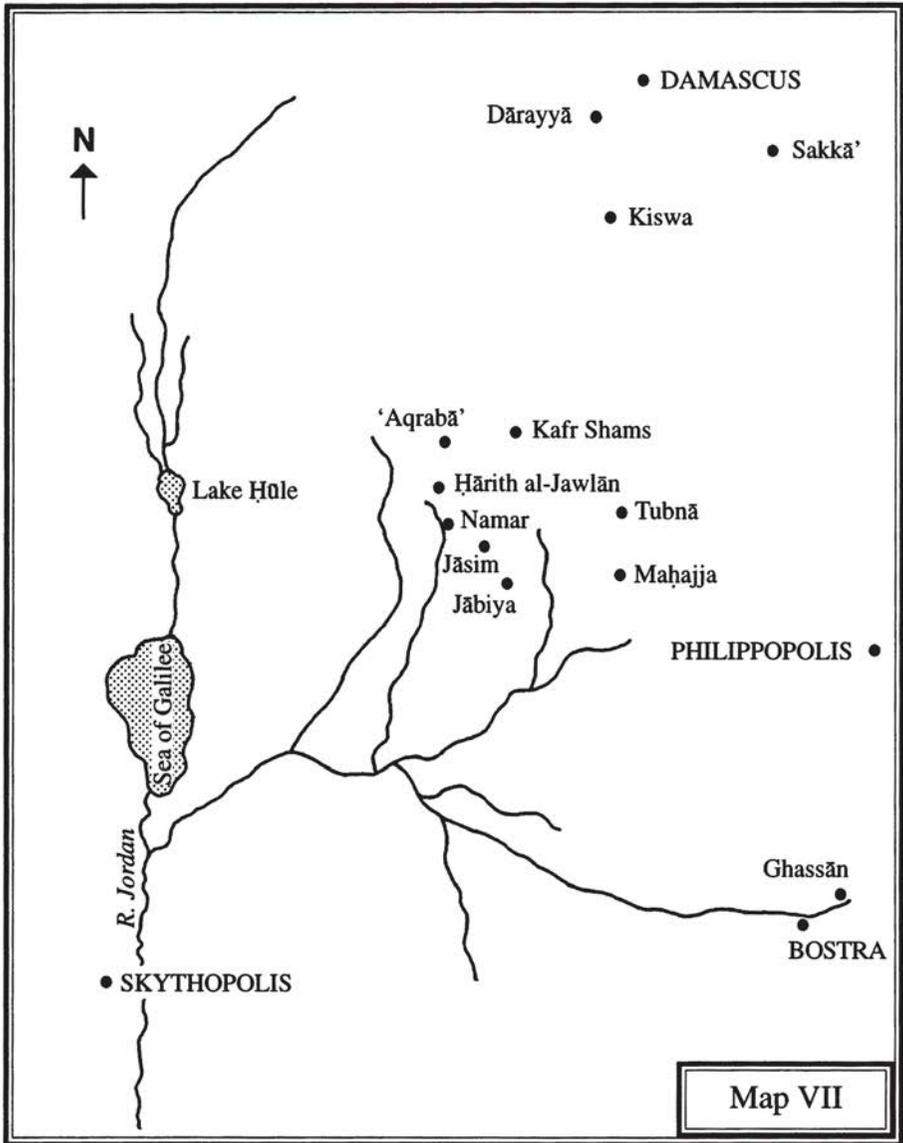
Map V represents the monastic establishment in the Desert of Juda and the area around Jerusalem. The Parembole is the site of the diminutive Arab church, the episcopate of the Parembole.



Map VI shows the one Ghassānid monastic foundation in Palaestina Prima that is recognizably such, Dayr Ghassāneh, as well as Dayr ʿAmr, possibly a federate Salīḥid or Ghassānid monastery. The map also shows the village of ʿĀbūd, which suggests an etymology for Bethabudison different from the one commonly held. Dayr ʿAmmār is shown because it was thought to be identical with Dayr ʿAmr; see *BAFIC*, 255, and above, 698, and the Addenda et Corrigenda.



Map VII shows the towns associated with the monasteries, the archimandrites of which wrote the letter condemning the Tritheistic heresy; (see the chapter on Justin II). The region that the map shows is that of Palaestina Secunda, Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis, and the northern part of the Provincia Arabia.



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The martyrdom of Saint Arethas in sixth-century Najrān, South Arabia. A miniature in the *Menologion of Basil II*, Vat. gr. 1613, fol. 135 (photo: courtesy Monseigneur Paul Canart, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

